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ABSTRACT

The report describes evaluation activities of Minnesota's PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Education Rights) Center's "Parents Helping Parents" Program and the "COUNT ME IN" Project. Section 1 focuses on "Parents Helping Parents," a program to make parents more effective advocates for their children and to encourage them to work closely with schools in planning appropriate educational programs for their children. The "Parents Helping Parents" project has five levels of activity: Level I--inform the general public regarding the needs and rights of handicapped children and PACER services; Level II--Workshops on special education laws for all parents of handicapped children; Level III--workshops on special education laws for specific groups, such as parents of preschool handicapped children or members of a specific disability group; Level IV--workshop training of parent advocates and advocates for parents of handicapped children; and Level V--individual advocacy assistance to parents of handicapped children. Findings on evaluating the "Parents Helping Parents" program are cited for each of the five levels of activity. Noted among results are that 92% of 160 randomly selected parents felt the information presented at the workshops was useful to them, and that the disability areas of learning disabilities, physical handicaps, and mental retardation continued to elicit the greatest number of calls for individual advocacy assistance. The "COUNT ME IN" project trains volunteers to provide educational programs about handicapped individuals to preschool and school age children. Goals are accomplished through three levels of activity--public information, volunteer training, and puppet show presentations. Among findings regarding "COUNT ME IN" project activities are that publicity efforts succeeded in attracting interest, that the effectiveness of the volunteer training was indicated by the evaluation participants, and that ratings of the puppet presentations by both children and adults were overwhelmingly positive. (SW)

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PACER Center Inc.

EVALUATION REPORT 1980-1981

Parents Helping Parents...

A parent training project to educate parents of handicapped children about state and federal special education laws.

Count Me In

A project to train volunteers to present puppet shows and information about disabilities to nonhandicapped children.

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EC150645

PACER CENTER, INC.

(THE PARENT ADVOCACY COALITION FOR EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS)

EVALUATION REPORT FOR 1980-81 AND A SUMMARY OF YEARS 1978-81 FOR THE PARENTS HELPING PARENTS PROGRAM AND THE COUNT ME IN PROJECT

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The 18 organizations involved in the PACER Coalition are listed in the Appendix.

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SECTION I

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

PACER Center is a coalition of 18 organizations in Minnesota concerned with the education of children and youth with physical, mental, emotional, and learning disabilities.

PACER was established in 1976 when it conducted a five month pilot project in Minnesota under a small grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. The Minnesota Department of Education continues to cooperate and provide encouragement to PACER Center.

Since September 1978, PACER has been funded by a three year grant from the Division of Personnel Preparation (DPP), Office of Special Education, U.S. Dept. of Education. PACER was the first parent coalition funded by DPP to provide parent training.

This report provides a description of the evaluation activities of the third year of operation of PACER's "Parents Helping Parents" project. The period covered in the report is June 1, 1980 through May 31, 1981. The purposes of this evaluation are to help PACER Center discover methods to improve its services to parents of handicapped children and to assist other organizations in developing parent training programs.

PACER Center's main function is to inform parents of handicapped children of their rights and responsibilities under special education laws. PACER's philosophy is "parents helping parents". Most of the project's staff and consultants are themselves parents of handicapped children. The project aims to make parents more effective advocates for their children and encourages them to work closely with the schools in planning appropriate educational programs for their children.

PACER Center accomplishes this function through five levels of activity. This evaluation report summarizes these levels of service. They are as follows:

LEVEL I - Public Information to inform the general public of the needs and rights of handicapped children and to make parents, educators, and others aware of PACER Center's services.

LEVEL II - Workshops on special education laws for all parents of handicapped children.

LEVEL III - Workshops on special education laws for specific groups, such as parents of preschool handicapped children, or members of a specific disability group.

LEVEL IV - Training of advocates who are interested in helping parents of handicapped children individually or at workshops.

LEVEL V - Individual advocacy assistance to parents of handicapped children. (Includes assistance to parents of handicapped children by telephone or mail, as well as assistance at school meetings.)

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION OF PACER's PARENT TRAINING PROJECT
1978 TO 1981
A THREE YEAR SUMMARY FOR "PARENTS HELPING PARENTS" PROJECT

PACER Center has greatly expanded its assistance to parents of handicapped children, professionals, and others during its three years of operation. Over 19,000 people have been served by PACER from September 1978 to May 31, 1981.

During the third year, PACER has had direct contact with approximately 7,000 parents of handicapped children, professionals, and others interested in the education of handicapped children. This includes 1,400 persons who attended Level I presentations; 1,221 persons who attended Level II, III, and IV workshops; and 4,390 persons who wrote or talked to PACER Center for information, referrals or individual advocacy assistance. These direct communications, added to comparable figures for the first two years, total over 19,000 people served. (This figure may include a number of repeat contacts since persons may have utilized more than one service.)

LEVEL I - PUBLIC INFORMATION

PACER Center increased its efforts to reach the general public with information about the educational rights of handicapped children, and to inform parents about the availability of PACER's services. These efforts included newspaper, radio and TV items about PACER, parents' rights, and workshops; articles in newsletters of advocacy groups and other agencies; and distribution of thousands of brochures and workshop flyers. During the third year, the use of six public service announcements on television reached more people than any other method of communication. PACER was also featured in a number of national newsletters and journals. During the third year, articles appeared in: NETWORK, a publication of the National Committee for Citizens in Education; CDF Reports, a publication of the Children's Defense Fund; NEW DIRECTIONS: National Association of State Mental Retardation Program Directors; and Teacher Education/Special Education Journal.

Level I also included presentations to groups requesting information about PACER Center and the viewpoint of parents of handicapped children. During the first year, 2,700 persons attended 55 presentations of this type; in the second year, more than 1,500 persons attended 48 such meetings, and in the third year, more than 1,400 persons attended 34 meetings. Thus, more than 5,600 individuals were directly reached with information through presentations during the first three years. PACER Center also presented workshops and information at many national conferences.

LEVELS II, III, AND IV WORKSHOPS

Workshops on special education for parents of handicapped children and others reached a total of 4,379 persons during the first three years of the project. Attendance was as follows:

	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS			
	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	Total
Level II (workshops for all parents of handicapped children)	1,001	1,159	738	2,898
Level III (workshops for special audience groups)	200	595	311	1,106
Level IV (advocacy training workshops)	82	67	222	371
Total persons who attended workshops	1,283	1,821	1,271	4,375

During the three years, PACER presented 76 Level II workshops, 55 Level III workshops, and 14 Level IV workshops or a total of 145 training workshops.

Ratings of workshops by participants were overwhelmingly positive during the three years. In 1978-79, 82% of the persons who completed surveys at the conclusion of the workshops rated them "excellent" or "very good"; the comparable figure for 1979-80 was 87%, and 1980-81 figure was 85%.

During the three years, almost one third of the participants at PACER workshops were professionals and "others." Judging from comments on evaluations from both parents and professionals, the interaction between the two groups appeared to be beneficial.

PACER conducted follow-up telephone surveys each spring with a total of 160 parents over the three year period to assess the value of the training workshops as perceived by parents at the end of the year. Parents stated that they felt the workshops had given them valuable information about their rights and, equally as important, had given them support and encouragement.

Evaluation data shows that 92% of 160 randomly selected parents felt the information presented at the workshops was useful to them; 92% of 160 parents felt more confident in dealing with the schools because of information from PACER, 64% of 110 parents (this question was not asked the first year) stated they were more involved in their child's education program since attending a PACER workshop and 56% of 160 parents stated that their handicapped child received better services because of putting the workshop information to use.

LEVEL IV - FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF ADVOCATES AND PARENT TRAINEES

The follow-up survey of over 50% of the 222 persons who took the Level IV advocacy training during the past year shows that participants are putting the information to use in a wide variety of ways, and that advocacy training is showing a "ripple effect" in reaching and helping other parents who have not received services directly from PACER Center.

Many of the people who attended Level IV training during the last three years continue to be active in PACER Center, assisting with workshops, helping other parents and making presentations on behalf of PACER.

LEVEL V - INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Over 9,300 people contacted the PACER office for information, referral or individual assistance during the three year period. Of the more than 9,300 persons, a total of 2,821 (590 the first year; 930 the second year; and 1,301 the third year) received assistance from the PACER staff about individual advocacy matters related to education or other services for a handicapped child.

In the three years, these advocacy assistance requests covered a wide variety of topics. Most were procedural questions relating to problems the callers had encountered in obtaining or improving special education services for a handicapped child. Others included special issues such as preschool services, transportation, or vocational education, related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and psychological counseling.

Follow-up telephone surveys were conducted each year with a total of 160 parents who had received individual advocacy assistance from PACER.

The overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the individual assistance PACER had provided, helped them become more knowledgeable about their rights in special education and that this knowledge gave them more confidence to communiate effectively with school personnel.

The 160 parents were selected in a stratified random sample at the end of each school year to determine the effectiveness of the individual assistance provided to the parents by PACER. Over the three years, 94% of 160 parents felt that the information received from PACER was moderately or very helpful; of 110 parents (this question was not asked during the first year) 86% felt more confident in their ability to work with schools as a result of PACER help; 73% out of 160 parents felt that PACER's assistance enabled them to obtain some of the service their child needed.

Many of the respondents had already put to use the information from PACER in order to attempt to obtain better services for their children. They said they appreciated the support they received and, in many cases, said they no longer felt "alone" in their problems.

CONCLUSION

PACER has been involved in replication activities and was chosen as one of seven training projects in the country by Dissemin/Action, a national significance project of the Office of Special Education in 1980 to receive assistance in preparing materials to assist other parent training projects. PACER has given assistance in replication efforts to parent groups, parent training projects and/or coalitions in Alaska, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Kentucky.

PACER Center believes that the last three years of its "Parents Helping Parents" project have been very successful in reaching the general public, parents of handicapped children and other interested people.

EVALUATION OF 1980-81 ACTIVITIES
LEVEL I - PUBLIC INFORMATION

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

PACER Center's public information efforts include programs to inform the general public about the educational rights of handicapped children, to inform parents of handicapped children about PACER Center's workshops and other services, and to inform educators and other interested groups and individuals about PACER Center's programs.

Following are the major public information activities during 1980-81:

1. NEWSPAPERS. A news release announcing PACER Center's fall workshop schedule and its services to parents of handicapped children was distributed statewide. Other news releases throughout the year were sent to selected newspapers, announcing specific workshops or series of workshops. Approximately 135 daily and weekly newspapers with total circulation of 2.8 million people printed these news releases.

2. RADIO. Radio public service announcements were distributed in most of the communities in which workshops were held. In some cases, PACER representatives or parents of handicapped children in the local communities were interviewed on tape or on the air by radio stations. PACER Center was featured on a series of programs on "Options in Education," a program of National Public Radio, which was rebroadcast around the country.

3. TELEVISION. Television stations in a number of communities used written public service announcements (PSA's) about coming PACER workshops. A Twin Cities area television station, KSTP-TV produced several public service announcements listing dates of four metro-area workshops and three additional PSAs encouraging parents to contact PACER Center. Many parents contacted PACER as a result of the publicity.

4. ADVOCACY NEWSLETTERS. PACER Center sent news releases to approximately 50 newsletters published by advocacy organizations and agencies interested in special education. Most of these newsletters published items about PACER Center and/or listed dates of workshops in one or more of their issues during the year.

5. BROCHURES. PACER Center distributed approximately 10,000 copies of its own brochure at various meetings, conferences, and exhibits. Many of the brochures were distrubted to advocacy organizations on request. Schools, medical organizations, and other organizations that reach parents of handicapped children also assisted with distribution.

6. NEWSLETTERS. Three issues of the PACESETTER, PACER Center's newsletter, were distributed during the year to a mailing list of approximately 7,000 parents, educators, and others in Minnesota and elsewhere. The newsletters included information on developments in special education, as well as about PACER's own programs.

7. WORKSHOP PUBLICITY. In advance of each of its Level II and Level III workshops (see definitions in the next section), PACER Center prepared a packet of materials to be used for local publicity. These materials were distributed to news media and other organizations by PACER Center or by parents of handicapped children or other contacts in the community where the workshop would be held. The publicity materials include releases for community newspapers and advocacy newsletters, letters to the editor to be placed in local newspapers, radio and television announcements, and suggestions for distribution of the flyers which publicized the workshops.

8. NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS. PACER Center was featured in articles in five national publications during the year: 1) NETWORK, a publication of the National Committee for Citizens in Education; 2) CDF REPORTS, a publication of the Children's Defense Fund; 3) NEW DIRECTIONS, a publication of the National Association of State Mental Retardation Program Directors; 4) The Association for the Severely Handicapped Newsletter, a publication of TASH; and 5) Teacher Education and Special Education, a journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children.

9. PRESENTATIONS. PACER Center staff and volunteers made 34 presentations about PACER Center's programs and the parent's perspective on special education. Total audience at these presentations was more than 1,400; the groups included graduate and undergraduate students, regular and special educators, educational administrators, parent advocates, and medical professionals. Presentations were also made to the U.S. House Select Committee on Education, and a national parent conference in Indianapolis.

10. EXHIBITS. PACER Center has preapred a standing display unit. This has been used at various conferences of advocacy groups, at Handicap Awareness Week exchibits, and at other meetings.

CONCLUSION - LEVEL I

Although specific numbers of people reached by information efforts are difficult to calculate, it is obvious that the numbers far exceeded the projection of 4,500 which was PACER's goal for its third year.

PACER Center's public information efforts have resulted in many direct contacts by parents of handicapped children who have learned about PACER through the media. In addition, the presentations made to professional and advocacy organizations result in parent referrals to PACER.

Thousands of people in the general public are exposed to PACER Center's public information. It is believed that this information creates awareness that will have a continuing impact on public understanding and acceptance of children with special needs.

EVALUATION OF 1980-81 ACTIVITIES
LEVEL II - WORKSHOPS FOR ALL PARENTS
AND
LEVEL III - WORKSHOPS FOR SPECIAL GROUPS

PURPOSE

PACER Center conducted a total of 20 Level II and 21 Level III workshops in 1980-81. Level II workshops are for all parents of handicapped children; Level III workshops are for special groups of parents, such as those whose children are preschool age, or those whose children have a particular disability.

The content in both types of workshops focuses on parents' and children's rights in special education, with information on assessment, parent involvement in planning individualized education programs (IEPs), advocacy, and parent-school communications. Participants at PACER workshops receive a packet of information, which contains material on special education laws and many other items of information for parents to use in the future.

In the Level III workshops, additional emphasis is placed on the shared concerns of the special audience such as programs for preschool age handicapped children, and special problems related to a specific disability.

Since the same evaluation forms are completed by participants in Level II and Level III workshops, the data is combined in this report.

CONSULTATION TO PILOT REGION 8

PACER Center was involved in a project conducted in Region 8 (southwestern Minnesota) Educational Cooperative Service Unit. Funding for the project was awarded to the region by the State of Minnesota to develop parent training programs and to provide assistance to parents and schools. PACER Center presented four workshops in Region 8 and assisted the parent-school liaison (staff) with additional information and material throughout the year.

SUMMARY OF LEVEL II AND III WORKSHOPS

LEVEL II

The 20 Level II workshops were attended by 738 persons, including 449 (63%) who were parents of handicapped children. (PACER's projected goal for the third year was to reach 700 to 1,000 persons at 20-25 Level II workshops.) Fourteen of these workshops were held outside the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. These workshops were held throughout the state as indicated below:

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO. OF WORKSHOPS
Regions 1 & 2	1
Region 3	1
Region 4	3
Region 5 & 7	4
Region 8 (PACER Pilot Region area)	4
Region 9	0
Region 10	0
Region 11 East (St. Paul area)	3
Region 11 West (Minneapolis area)	3
Out of State	1
Total Level II Workshops	20

LEVEL III

The 21 Level III workshops were attended by 311 persons of whom 158 (51%) were parents of handicapped children. PACER Center's projected goal for 1980-81 was to reach 150 to 200 persons at 10 to 12 Level III workshops. Most of the Level III workshops were held in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The groups to whom PACER made presentations included a wide variety of interests and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds: Head Start parents and coordinators, two organizations whose members included foster parents of handicapped children, and groups of parents of hearing impaired, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, muscular dystrophy, and autistic children.

EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

At the end of all Level II and Level III workshops, participants were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire, and 673 participants out of 1,049 (64%) did so. The following information was from these questionnaires. When comments are recorded in this and following sections, they are selected because they are judged to be representative of most of the comments from participants. In reading this report, it is important to note that two evaluation forms were used during the year for Level III workshops. Therefore, the number of participants responding to certain questions varies.

THE QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Who attended the workshops? (Number of questionnaires = 673)

Number	Percentage	Category
437	60%	Parent/relative of handicapped child
100	14%	Staff member of other agency
67	9%	Special educator or administrator
67	9%	Regular educator or administrator
61	8%	Other
0	0	No response
732	100%	Total

Examples of persons represented in the "Other" category are: students in nursing, occupational therapy, interpreting and special education; psychologist; day care providers; and advocates

*The total is greater than 673 because certain respondents indicated that they were parents of handicapped children and also were educators or staff members of another agency.

2. What is the age of your handicapped child? (Number = 604)

Age	No. of Children	% of Total
Birth to 3 years	62	13%
4-5	84	18%
6-11	165	36%
12-14	71	15%
15-18	55	12%
19-22	14	3%
Older	10	3%
Total	461	100%

3. What is your child's primary handicapping condition? (Number = 604)

Handicap	# of Children	% of Total
Mental retardation (including developmentally delayed)	136	31%
Learning Disabilities (special learning and behavior problems)	101	23%
Orthopedically impaired	67	15%
Speech impaired	45	10%
Hearing impaired	38	9%
Other health impairments	27	5%
Vision impaired	15	3%
Emotional disturbance	9	2%
Autism	4	1%
Multiple handicaps	3	1%
Total	445	100%

Of the 604 respondents, 35% did not answer this question.

4. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop? (Number = 673)

Percentage of Total	Category
43%	Excellent
42%	Very Good
11%	Good
1%	Fair
0	Poor
3%	No Response
100%	Total

5. Have you learning anything new? (Number = 673)

94%	YES
3%*	NO
3%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

*Participants who answered NO to this question, indicated that the information presented was a good review.

6. Has this workshop helped you understand what to do if you are not satisfied with your child's education? (Number = 604)

65%	YES
1%	NO
34%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

7. How did you find out about this workshop? (Number = 561)

% of Total	Category
30%	Flyer from school
24%	PACER
16%	Flyer from other organization
16%*	Other
15%	Friend
14%	Newspaper
10%	Parent group
8%	Radio/TV
1%	No response
134%**	Total

*Examples of additional sources included in the OTHER category are: legal advocates; Vocational Rehabilitation Center; State Education Department; Hospital Staff; and Special Education Director

**The total is greater than 100 because participants were asked to indicate all sources of information about the workshop. Thirty-four percent of the participants indicated multiple sources.

8. Would you like to receive special training to be an advocate for handicapped children? (Number = 675)

21%	YES
32%	NO
4%*	UNDECIDED
43%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

*Four percent of the participants indicated they were undecided because they would need further information on the role of an advocate or that they may be interested in receiving training in the future.

9. List a few important things you have learned or parts you liked best. (Number of questionnaires = 673) No. of items learned/liked = 1,264

Percentage	
25%	DUE PROCESS RIGHTS (specifically mentioned parent participation; right to appeal; physical education--a right for handicapped students; vocational education/rehabilitation when appropriate for a student; related services information; surrogate parents; and right of a parent to examine their child's school records and have inaccurate data removed.
15%	IEP--(time lines for signing mentioned frequently)

Percentage	
11%	Other (mentioned by less than 1% of respondents) was update/review; visual aids; information about PACER; advocacy; rural community services; and greater awareness of other disabilities.
6%	Assessment and obtaining appropriate testing for a child.
6%	Laws--state and federal--especially P.L. 94-142, Buckley amendment.
6%	Workshop packet and resource information provided by PACER.
6%	All
6%	Small group discussions and questions--both parents and educators said that they gained greater insight and respect for one another through this time of sharing in small groups.
3%	Simulation
3%	Presentation--concise, well organized, interesting.
3%	Team staffing
2%	COUNT ME IN puppets
2%	Assertiveness skills
2%	Funding--special interest in the effects of block grants.
2%	How to initiate help.
2%	Viewpoint of a handicapped adult
100%	Total

11% of the participants did not respond to this question.

10. Do you have any suggestions for improving this workshop? (No. of Questionnaires = 673) No. of suggestions = 355

51%	No response
15%	Other (suggestions made by less than 1% of participants). They were: have a sample IEP available; more time for simulation practice; reserve time at end of the workshop for questions; and tailor the workshop to groups with specific handicaps.
11%	None--no improvement needed.
10%	Increase time allotted for small group.
6%	Lengthen the time of the workshop.
3%	Repeat worskhops in an area more frequently.
2%	Have school personnel represented at the workshop.
2%	No smoking--better ventilation. Some participants felt the room where the workshop was held was uncomfortable--too hot--too cold.
100%	Total

11. What topics would you like for another workshop? (No. of questionnaires = 673)
No. of suggested topics = 262

Percentage	
63%	No Response
15%	Other (suggestions made by less than 1% of participants). Some suggestions were: forming local coalitions; available resources; surrogate parents; funding; COUNT ME IN; review/update of workshop information; and handicapped teens.
5%	Workshops designed to obtain specific information about handicaps. (Most frequent request was learning disability information.)
4%	Preschool services.
4%	Career planning/vocational rehabilitation.
3%	Advocacy
2%	Assertiveness skills.
2%	Workshop devoted to helping parents and teachers develop coping skills.
2%	More indepth coverage of various workshop topics. (For example, IEP, assessment, due process, and related services).
100%	Total

Other comments:

Workshop participants were encouraged to write any additional comments or suggestions for PACER staff on the evalution form. Most frequently these comments reflected a new respect and understanding between parents and professionals. Others commented on the detailed and informative material covered. A sampling of the comments received follows:

"Thank you! You have come up with a viable process at hand to assist one very frustrated parent. Now I see more of an adventure ahead instead of feeling so isolated. I think I need an assertiveness class; how to say what I mean in dealing with these professionals who are also frustrated and uncomfortable in the situation."

"I would like to thank you for your excellent project. It makes me feel good to know I can refer people to you and know they will get appropriate help. You have helped people take care of their own lives or their childrens and I could't give a higher compliment to a group of advocates. Thank you!"

"This is a good workshop and as a professional helps me keep proper perspective as to what my job is all about."

"Outstanding"--very informative
--a great help to parents
--essential for PACER and school districts to work together"

"A great rewarding day. Each staff member gave parents and professionals great insight into needs and laws."

"As a teacher, it was good to hear the parents' point of view. Now I can be more aware of their needs and how they can be helped."

"Well informed, articulate staff."

"I believe that the best advocate for my child is to be an informed parent and PACER is providing an excellent opportunity for parents who want to be informed."

"This workshop would be of exceptional value to "new" parents of handicapped children as to how to proceed and what to expect and as a stepping stone for any parent of a handicapped child. Somehow, more parents should be educated in this non-biased way. Too often, when a specific agency or system provides the educational information to parents, it becomes very one sided."

CONCLUSIONS--LEVEL II AND LEVEL III WORKSHOPS

Combining attendance figures for the three years of PACER's existence, nearly 4,000 people have attended Level II and Level III workshops. During 1980-81, the third year, 1,049 people participated.

The 1980-81 data show that participants at the workshops found the information they received to be helpful and appropriate. In addition, the parents' comments suggest that the workshops helped them become more confident in their ability to communicate and resolve problems and that they received support from workshop presenters and other participants. Also, school personnel found the PACER workshops to be extremely valuable.

WORKSHOP LOCATIONS AND ATTENDANCE

The tables on this and the next page show the locations, dates, and numbers of participants at all Level II and III workshops. Following the tables is a map of Level II workshops, showing the towns in which they were held and the area from which participants were drawn to each workshop.

LEVEL II - NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ATTENDING EACH WORKSHOP
JUNE 1, 1980 - MAY 31, 1981

PLACE	DATE	PARENTS	OTHERS	TOTAL
Milwaukee*	8-5-80	18	15	33
Cold Spring	10-23-80	44	14	58
Morris	10-28-80	25	8	33
Bemidji	11-18-80	28	12	40
Brooklyn Center	1-29-81	13	4	17
Minneapolis	2-5-81	28	20	48
Minneapolis	2-7-81	38	14	52
Annandale	2-26-81	26	11	37
St. Paul	3-12-81	28	14	42
St. Paul	3-14-81	41	20	61
Detroit Lakes	3-23-81 a.m.	19	8	27
Detroit Lakes	3-23-81 p.m.	13	16	29
Pipestone	3-30-81 a.m.	15	7	22
Pipestone	3-30-81 p.m.	16	7	23
Windom	3-31-81 a.m.	14	11	25
Windom	3-31-81 p.m.	18	27	45
Brainerd	4-7-81	28	22	50
Hastings	4-23-81	14	6	20
Eveleth	5-6-81	13	52	65
Pine City	5-12-81	10	1	11
Total		449	289	738

*Out of Minnesota

LEVEL III - NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ATTENDING EACH WORKSHOP
JUNE 1, 1980 - MAY 31, 1981

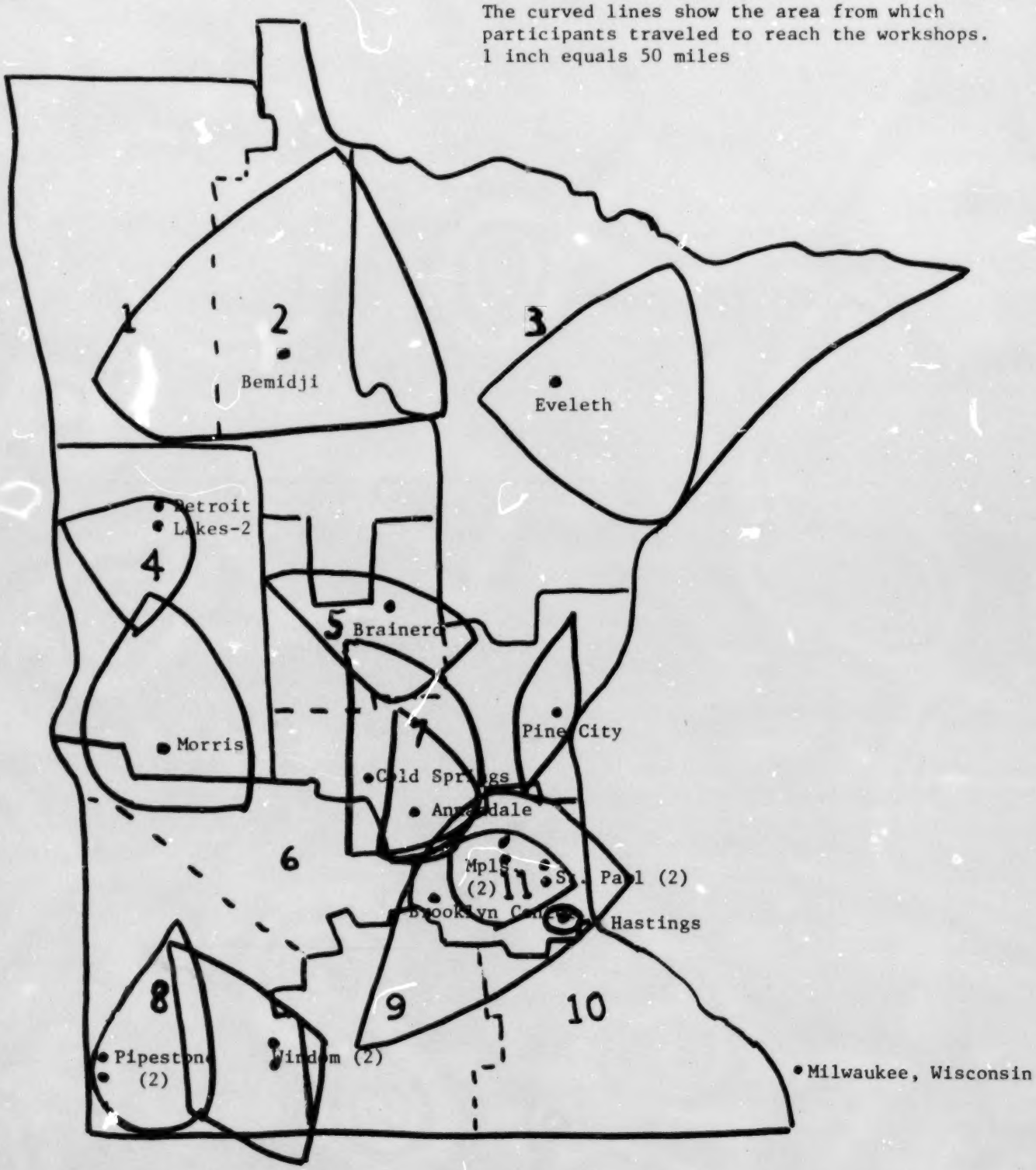
PLACE	DATE	PARENTS	OTHERS	TOTAL
MnARC State Conv.(1)	6-14-80	2	7	9
Spec. Olympics	8-9-80 a.m.	2	3	5
Spec. Olympics	8-9-80 p.m.	7	2	9
Burnsville Foster Parents	8-19-80	23	1	24
MACLD (2)	9-26-80	10	30	40
Waconia Preschool	9-29-80	2	7	9
Indianapolis, Indiana*	10-18-80	19	2	21
Mankato Head Start	12-12-80	10	57	67
Elk River DAC (3)	1-9-81	4	2	6
Spring Lake Park	1-14-81	12	8	20
Mpls. ACT (4)	2-12-81	0	15	15
Crossroads	2-16-81	4	0	4
Muscular Dystrophy Group	2-24-81	10	1	11
Mann School	2-31-81 a.m.	8	2	10
Mann School	2-31-81 p.m.	11	1	12
Emerson School	3-5-81	12	4	16
St. Paul DAC (3)	4-2-81	4	3	7
Anderson D School	4-6-81	0	6	6
St. Paul Rehab	4-14-81	6	0	6
Longfellow ED Program	4-27-81	7	2	9
Longfellow Preschool	5-14-81	5	0	5
Total		158	153	311

(1) MnARC (Minnesota Association for Retarded Children)
(2) MACLD (Minnesota Association for Children With Learning Disabilities)
(3) DAC (Developmental Achievement Center)
(4) ACT (Advocating Change Together)

*Out of Minnesota

PACER CENTER'S LEVEL II WORKSHOPS - 1980-81
Locations and Attendance Areas

Minnesota's special education regions are indicated by the large numbers. Each of the 20 Level II worskhops are shown by a dot. The curved lines show the area from which participants traveled to reach the workshops. 1 inch equals 50 miles



FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF PARENTS WHO RECEIVED PACER SERVICES DURING THE YEAR - WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

PURPOSE

In May 1981, telephone calls were made to 100 parents of handicapped children who received services from PACER Center during the year; 50 of them had attended Level II (general informational) workshops and 50 had called the office for assistance with situations involving their own child or children (see pages 33-34) No professionals or advocates were included in this follow-up survey.

The purposes of these follow-up surveys were (1) to determine how, after a period of time, the participants evaluated the services they received, and (2) to determine whether parents were able to put to use the information they had received.

All the calls in the surveys were made by the same person, who is not a member of the PACER staff, and the same questions were asked of all participants in each of the two categories.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF PARENTS WHO ATTENDED LEVEL II WORSKHOPS

The 50 parents were chosen randomly from registration lists of persons who attended 9 of PACER's 20 Level II workshops. The following chart shows where the workshops were located:

Workshop	Region	Number Interviewed	Workshop Date
Cold Springs	7	8	10-23-80
Mpls.	11W	6	2-5-81
Mpls.	11W	6	2-7-81
St. Paul	11E	6	3-12-81
St. Paul	11E	7	3-14-81
Detroit Lakes	4	5	3-23-81 (2)
Annandale	7	5	2-26-81
Windom	8	4	3-31-81 (2)
Pipestone	8	3	3-30-81 (2)

Twenty-five parents (50% of those interviewed) lived in school districts outside the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. This breakdown corresponds to the distribution of the general population of Minnesota.

The ages and primary disabilities of the children of the survey respondents corresponds generally with the ages and disabilities of the children of other parents with whom PACER has had contact, even though the survey participants were chosen randomly.

Following is a summary of responses to the questions asked of parents in the telephone survey.

1. Was any of the information presented at the workshop useful for you?

46	92%	YES
4	8%	NO
50	100%	TOTAL

The most frequent comments related to information about parents due process rights, IEP's and what can be done if you are not satisfied. Many also mentioned the value of support from other parents, and that the workshop was a real pick-me-up or refreshed and inspired them to renew their efforts.

2. Are you more confident in dealing with schools because of information or support you have received from PACER Center?

41	82%	YES
6	12%	NO
3	6%	OTHER
50	100%	TOTAL

Most felt that knowing their due process rights and their right to be involved gave them confidence from knowing that there was a place, PACER Center, where they could go for future assistance if needed. Some of the others checking "NO" and "OTHER" replied that their child was not yet in the public schools (they were in DAC's, preschools, or at home) and that they had always felt, or were very confident in the past.

3. Do you feel you have been more involved in your child's educational program since you attended the workshop?

26	52%	YES MORE INVOLVED
18	36%	HAVE BEEN INVOLVED
3	6%	EXPECT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE FUTURE
3	6%	NO
50	100%	TOTAL

Of the 50 parents interviewed, 88% (44) are very involved in their handicap child's educational program. Of those 44, 52% (26) have become more involved since attending the PACER workshop. Three persons (6%) expected to be more involved at the end of the year conference. Three persons (6%) said no, they didn't feel they were more involved.

4. Has your child received better services because you have put workshop information to use?

13	26%	Already good
22	44%	Have achieved better service
9	18%	Trying to get better service
6	12%	No
50	100%	Total

Of the 50 parents interviewed, 12 (26%) felt they already were receiving good educational services for their children. Thirty one (62%) have worked to achieve better services as a result of what they learned at the PACER workshop, with 22 (44% of 50) of those getting better service before the end of the school year and 9 (18%) still in the process. Six persons (12%) said they were unable to get better services.

5. Child's Single Most Important Disability

Mental Retardation	11	21.6%
Speech and Language	9	17.6%
Special Learning Problems and Learning Disabilities	15	29.4%
Orthopedically Handicapped	4	7.8%
Hearing Impairment	4	7.8%
Vision Impairment	2	3.9%
Emotionally Disturbed	1	1.9%
Other**	5	9.8%
Total	51*	99.8%

*One parent had two handicapped children , hence the count of 51, both learning disabled.

*Other includes asthma, developmental delays, social and emotional, multi-handicapped, etc.

6. Child's Ages

0-3	8	15.7%
4-5	7	13.7%
6-11	23	45.1%
12-14	8	15.6%
15-18	4	7.8%
19-21	0	0
Over	1	1.9%
Total	51	99.8%

EVALUATION OF 1980-81 ACTIVITIES
LEVEL IV - TRAINING OF ADVOCATES

PURPOSE

Level IV activities train persons to help conduct workshops on the special education laws for other parents of handicapped children, and train persons to serve as advocates for parents of handicapped children. During 1980-81, PACER held 7 such training workshops, attended by a total of 222 persons. PACER had projected training 50-75 advocates. Workshop topics for June 1, 1980 to May 31, 1981 included advocacy training; update for advocates (co-sponsored with MACLD); coalition formation techniques; assertiveness training; and workshop presentation techniques (to train volunteers to aid PACER in presenting workshops throughout Minnesota.)

EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

At the end of each workshop, participants were asked to fill out an evaluation questionnaire. One hundred twenty seven (57%) did so. A summary of the responses of these participants follows. It is important to note that responses to certain questions may be significantly lower as they were added or deleted to meet the specific content of the workshop.

EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

1. Who attended the workshops? No. of questionnaire = 127)

49%	Parent
9%	Head Start Coordinator
20%	Organization or agency staff
31%	*Other
1%	No Response
110%**	Total

*There were a wide variety of occupations represented with the "Other" category. Some examples were RN, audiologist, occupational therapist, social worker, psychologist, professor, juvenile attorney and students in education.

**The total percentage is greater than 100 due to 10% of the respondents indicating that they were both the parent of a handicapped child and a professional. For example, parent/special education teacher, parent/organization or agency staff person.

2. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop? (Number = 127)

43%	Excellent
40%	Very Good
13%	Good
1%	Fair
1%	Poor
2%	No Response
100%	Total

3. Did you learn anything new from attending this workshop? (Number = 127)

94%	YES
2%	NO*
4%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

*Those people who answered no to this question indicated that the workshop was a good review for them.

4. Please indicate a few things you learned or parts you liked best. (Number = 127) Number of comments = 287

Percentage of Comments

10%	Assertiveness skills and techniques
10%	Simulations (PACER Players)
7%	Vocational Education and Rehabilitation
5%	Presentation
5%	Update/Review
5%	Related Service
4%	Advocacy
44%	*Other
100%	Total

The comments varied greatly. The percentages tabulated above are representative of the most frequently mentioned comments.

*Some examples of responses in the "Other" category include licensing requirements; coalition formation; information about PACER; laws and current issues within Minnesota and nationally; small group discussion and questions; handouts; and obtaining appropriate **services** for a handicapped child.

5. Has this training session made you feel more confident in your ability to be an advocate for a parent? (Number = 79)

90%	YES
3%	NO
7%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

6. Has this training session been helpful to you in formulating plans to form a coalition and reach parents? (Number = 17)

82%	YES
12%	NO
6%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

7. Has this training session been helpful to you in setting personal goals for improving your assertiveness/communication skills? (Number = 31)

97%	YES
0%	NO
3%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

8. Has this training session made you feel more confident to present a workshop to other parents? (Number = 23)

57%	YES
26%	NO
17%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

9. Do you feel that the workshop packet will be useful to you? (Number = 44)

89%	VERY USEFUL
11%	MODERATELY USEFUL
0%	NOT USEFUL
0%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

10. What suggestions do you have for improving this workshop? (Number of Questionnaires = 84) Number of suggestions = 52

18%	NONE OR NO IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
18%	MORE TIME FOR THE WORKSHOP
6%	INCREASE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
5%	NO SMOKING/BETTER VENTILATION
18%	*OTHER
35%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

*Some examples of responses in the "Other" category include increase simulation practice time; conduct more worskhops; more indepth information on assertiveness and advocacy skills; confine questions to the end of the workshop; and thank you for the information presented.

11. If you were to attend another workshop in the future, what topics or information would be of most benefit to you? (Number of questionnaires = 83) Number of comments = 72

19%	MORE INDEPTH INFORMATION ON ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING
6%	UPDATE/REVIEW OF WORKSHOP TOPICS
5%	SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING
5%	PRESCHOOL
4%	TECHNIQUES FOR DEVELOPING A TRAINING PROGRAM
4%	LICENSING INFORMATION
27%	*OTHER
30%	NO RESPONSE
100%	TOTAL

*Some examples of responses in the "Other" category include career planning and employment opportunities; needs of rural communities; mainstream problems; legal rights; and additional information concerning advocacy.

OTHER COMMENTS:

Workshop participants frequently added a word of thanks or other comment on the evaluation form. Listed below are some examples of these comments.

> "The three services you provide are so very helpful--support, information and action."
>
> "I feel the workshop has been presented very well. You have used participation, visual aids and several trainers. You all did a terrific job!"
>
> "Super!! I feel so good about myself now!" (Assertiveness Training)
>
> "Quite a learning experience. I will take home many helpful hints, also many subjects to talk over with friends and family. Thank you."

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that participants found the 7 workshops to be very useful, particularly the information on assertiveness and the packet of information. In rating the workshops, 83% of the participants felt the Level IV workshops were excellent or very good.

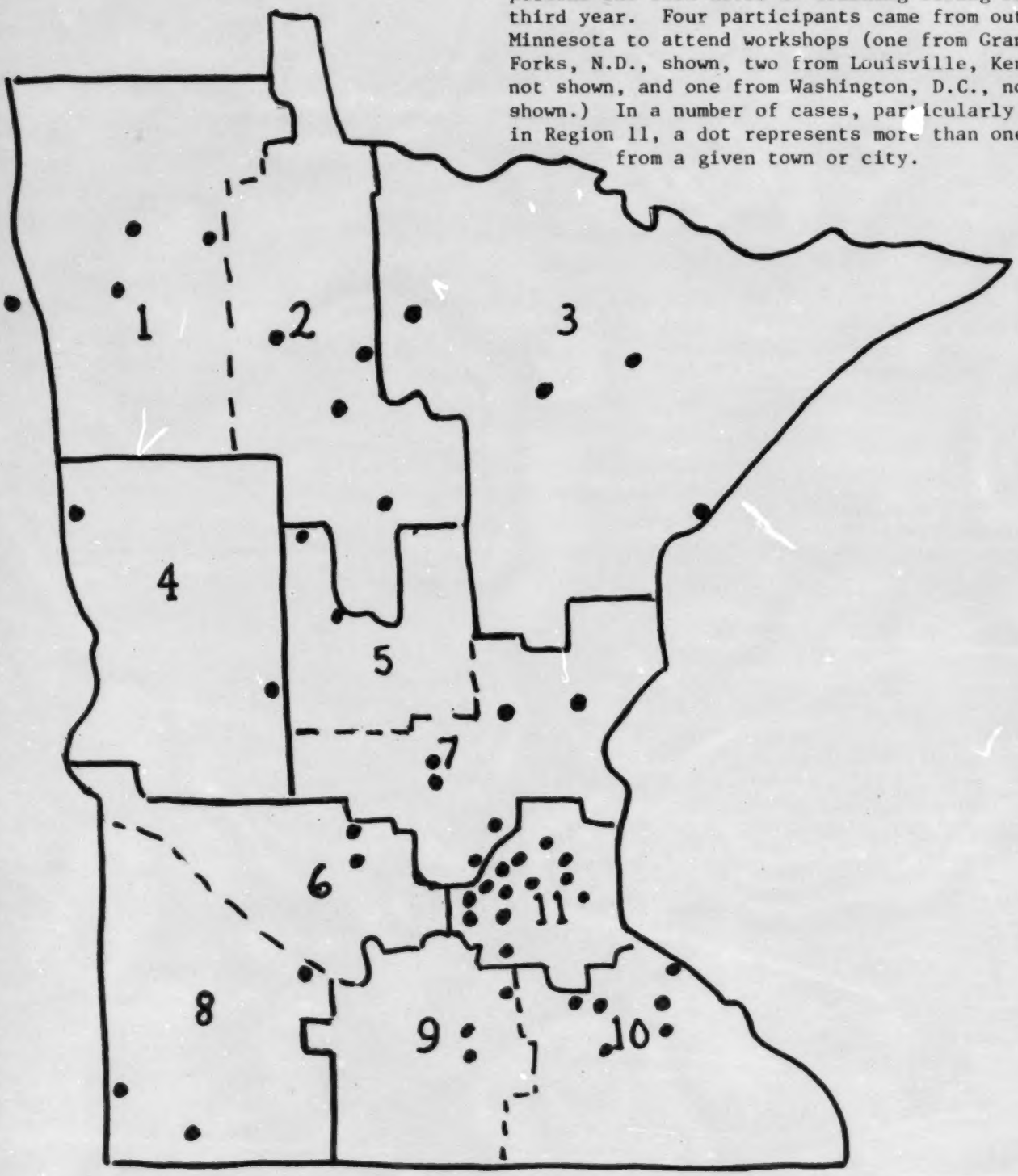
LEVEL IV - NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ATTENDING EACH WORKSHOP

JUNE 1, 1980 - MAY 31, 1981

PLACE	DATE	PARENTS	OTHERS	TOTAL
Milwaukee	8-6-80	4	3	7
Pennsylvania	8-16-80	52	18	70
Brainerd	10-8-80	36	22	58
St. Paul Advocacy Update	10-21-80	26	14	40
Mpls.	1-21-81	13	11	24
Mpls.	1-28-81	3	3	6
Bemidji	2-11-81	0	17	17
Total		134	88	222

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION OF LEVEL IV PARTICIPANTS, 1980-81

The dots show the towns or cities of residence of persons who took Level IV training during PACER's third year. Four participants came from outside Minnesota to attend workshops (one from Grand Forks, N.D., shown, two from Louisville, Kentucky, not shown, and one from Washington, D.C., not shown.) In a number of cases, particularly in Region 11, a dot represents more than one person from a given town or city.



FOLLOW-UP SURVEY
IMPACT OF LEVEL IV ADVOCACY TRAINING UPON ACTIVITIES OF ADVOCATES

PURPOSE

To determine the impact of Level IV Advocacy Training upon the activities of workshop participants, PACER distributed a survey to persons who had attended any one of five training sessions held from October 1980 through February 1981. One hundred thirty one surveys were mailed out, 67 returned--a response rate of 51%.

SUMMARY OF ADVOCATES AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Following is a summary of responses to the survey of advocacy activities:

1. When did you take PACER training? (Number of participants = 67)

Number	Percentage	Time of Training
19	28%	Fall 1980 (Head Start-Brainerd)
24	36%	Fall 1980 (St. Paul)
16	24%	Winter 1981 (Mpls.)
6	9%	Winter 1981 (Mpls.)
10	15%	Winter 1981 (Head Start-Bemidji)
75	112%*	Total

*Some persons attended more than one training session, which accounts for the response rate of over 100%.

2. Are you a parent, staff person, board member, or volunteer for advocacy group or educator? (Number of participants = 67)

24	36%	Parent
26	39%	Staff person, board member, or volunteer for advocacy/consumer group
25	37%	Educator (teacher, administrator, social worker, etc.)
13	19%	Other (please explain)
75	131%*	Total

*Some persons are parents of handicapped children as well as staff persons, or educators, etc., which accounts for the response of over 100%.

3. Please check all the activities that you have participated in since you took PACER training. (Number of participants = 67)

Participants	Percentage	
59	88%	Provided advice or support to a parent of a handicapped child, e.g. over the phone, in person, etc.
56	84%	Spoke informally to educators regarding special education
33	49%	Spoke informally to doctors, dentists, and other professionals about special education concerns
32	48%	Counselled a parent prior to a school conference
30	45%	Helped plan meeting, workshop, in-service or conference regarding special education and/or handicapped children
28	42%	Accompanied a parent to a school conference
26	39%	Wrote letters or newsletter articles about special education concerns
25	37%	Communicated informally with policy makers (school board member, legislators, etc.)
23	34%	Did volunteer work (or joined staff) for disability/ advisory group
22	33%	Spoke to a school, church, civic, university, parent, or consumer group
22	33%	Attended a conference/meeting regarding special education as representative of parent/consumer group (e.g., Bell Conference, other local, regional, state or national meetings)
21	31%	Helped an inactive parent group become more active or helped strengthen an existing parent/consumer group or coalition
19	28%	Was a speaker/panel member at conference or workshop related to special education
14	21%	Joined advocacy/disability group
14	21%	Joined a special education advisory group or committee
10	15%	Helped PACER Center at a workshop
8	12%	Accompanied a parent to a conciliation conference
7	10%	Wrote letter-to-editor about special education concerns
7	10%	Helped organize a parent/consumer group or special education advisory group
7	10%	Other activities--please describe
4	6%	Spoke at school board meeting on behalf of special education concerns
4	6%	Provided testimony regarding special education issues at federal, state or local hearings, conferences or meetings
0	0	Accompanied a parent to a due process hearing

While the types of activities most frequently engaged in by Level IV trainees were **clearly** informal (communication on a parent-to-parent or parent-to-professional level), trainees were obviously viewed as valuable resource people, as reflected in the numbers who spoke at and helped plan various meetings, workshops, and conferences; and wrote letters or articles about special education concerns. Significant numbers were also active in parent/consumer groups. Respondents were active on a variety of levels; 7 activities were the average number engaged in by trainees.

4. Did you find the PACER packets of information helpful and useful? (Number of participants = 67)

65	97%	YES
0	0	NO
2	3%	NOT APPLICABLE
67	100%	TOTAL

5. Did you receive information that was useful to you at the PACER workshop? (Number = 67)

65	98%	YES
1	1.5%	NO
1	1.5%	NOT APPLICABLE
67	100%	TOTAL

6. Do you feel that you developed more training and advocacy skills as a result of attending the workshop? (Number = 67)

65	97%	YES
1	1.5%	NO
1	1.5%	NOT APPLICABLE
67	100%	TOTAL

7. Do you feel more self confident in your interactions with schools after attending the PACER workshop? (Number = 67)

64	96%	YES
0	0	NO
3	4%	NOT APPLICABLE
67	100%	TOTAL

8. OTHER COMMENTS (Number of participants = 67)

Not all survey respondents made additional comments. The following are some sample selections:

"PACER unquestionably provides a coordinated service to advocacy organizations that no other agency is able to provide. I don't know where we'd be without you."

"No matter how many years I've been "slugging it out in the trenches" I find I can always learn something from you."

"I consider the PACER training to be professional level education at the level of graduate continuing study work."

"The PACER training has given me what I needed to be a strong advocate with the schools to advise parents and to attend school conferences as a knowledgeable professional."

"The PACER workshop enabled me to give more complete and accurate information to other parents interested in special education."

"You've done an excellent job. I hope you will be allowed to continue." (referring to future funding)

"After taking the training in Brainerd, I can now stand up for my rights without being afraid or guilty."

"As both a professional and advocacy organization volunteer I have found PACER workshops to be valuable forums for the expressions of parent concerns which they might not express individually to a teacher or principal. It has been possible for me to follow up on these complaints/recommendations and to report back to parent(s). In some cases these complaints have actually resulted in changes in the offending procedure so that the system has been able to respond more sensitively to parents as partners."

CONCLUSION

There was almost an equal division among parents, persons from advocacy/consumer groups and educators taking PACER Level IV Advocacy Training (one of the sessions was for Head Start and Early Childhood personnel which involved very few parents of handicapped children.) Nearly all found the materials and information presented at workshops helpful to them, and significant numbers reported that they had developed more advocacy skills and more self-confidence in interactions with schools as a result of having taken the training. Trainees exhibited a high level of involvement in advocacy activities and a grasp of significant issues in special education.

EVALUATION OF 1980-81 ACTIVITIES
LEVEL V - INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

PURPOSE

During the 12 month period beginning June 1, 1980, PACER received 4,370 telephone and mail communications from parents of handicapped children, professionals, and others. These communications included requests for general information or referral, inquiries about workshops or other presentations, and requests for individual advocacy assistance. Some general mail and telephone communications were not tabulated or included in the 4,370 figure. From September 1978 to May 31, 1981, PACER received 9,415 mail and telephone communications.

PACER does not have a toll free number but it encourages parents outside the Twin Cities area to call collect.

SUMMARY OF TELEPHONE AND MAIL COMMUNICATIONS

1. How many communication intakes were received each month?

Month	Parents	Advocate Organizations	Professionals	Other	Total
June 1980 through August 1980	288	146	203	60	697
September	198	64	112	16	390
October	171	62	104	33	370
November	137	62	156	20	375
December	103	46	60	15	224
January 1981	201	68	143	37	449
February	223	84	154	31	492
March	342	81	119	45	587
April	196	89	115	26	426
May	171	61	96	32	360
Total	2,030	763	1,262	315	4,370

"Parents" include parents and other relatives of handicapped children, foster parents, and group home houseparents. "Professionals" include primarily school district and regional educational personnel. "Advocates" include representatives of disability organizations, legal advocates, and persons who have taken PACER advocacy training. Many of the advocates are parents of handicapped children but they were counted as advocates when their inquiry dealt with children other than their own.

The numbers of telephone and mail intakes tended to increase in the fall and again in the winter/spring. Some of these calls related to information about workshops, which were held in greater numbers in February and March.

2. Where do people live who contact PACER?

Minnesota is divided into planning regions that are also used as special education administration regions. All 12 regions of Minnesota were represented in the 4,370 communication calls PACER received.

TOTAL COMMUNICATION INTAKES BY REGIONS

Region	Total	Percent
West Metro: Mpls. 11W	1,958	44.8
East Metro: St. Paul 11E	1,063	24.3
Region 10	133	3.0
South Central-Region 9	79	1.8
Southwest-Region 8	65	1.5
Central-Region 7	203	4.6
West Central-Region 6	45	1.0
N. Central-Region 5	48	1.1
West-Region 4	56	1.3
Northeast-Region 3	73	1.7
Northwest-Region 2	51	1.2
Far Northwest-Region 1	25	.6
Out of State	566*	13.0
Out of Country	5	.1
Total	4,370*	100.0%

Some changes are apparent in the geographic distribution of the callers between the first and third year of PACER's operation. A total of 74% of the first year's callers were from Regions 11E and 11W; the total was 63% the second year, and 69% the third year. There was an increase in contacts from persons outside of Minnesota from 4.3% the first year, 12% the second year, and 13% the third year. This is at least partially attributable to national publicity that PACER has received. *Note: An additional 50 communication intakes about replicating PACER parent training were received from other states, but not tabulated.

3. What information and education services were requested?

Of the total 4,370 telephone and mail intakes, 2,309 (53%) included requests for information and education. (Many intakes included more than one type of request and would be included in data for other "levels" as well.) These information and education intakes include a variety of types of requests, as indicated below:

Intake	Number	Percent
Information on PACER	1,178	27
Information and Referral	1,131	26
Meet with PACER staff	51	1.2
Speech/conference requests	45	1.0
Teacher inservice requests	19	.4
Information for newsletters or articles	26	.6
Other (laws, etc.)	420	9.6
Total	2,870	65.8*

These requests "peaked" during the same months as did the overall contacts with PACER Center. Information on PACER and referrals to other organizations and agnecies continued to predominate, as they did the first two years.

4. How did people learn about PACER's services?

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PACER	Number	Percent
TV and radio	176	18.7
Advocacy organizations	172	18
School personnel	137	14.5
Friends	119	12.6
PACER workshops	103	10
Agencies serving handicapped persons	93	9.88
PACER brochure/newsletter, speeches	63	6.6
PACER staff/board	41	4.4
Other	21	2.2
Newspaper	16	1.7
Total	941	100%

Of the 4,370 persons who contacted PACER Center, 941 (22%) indicated how they learned about the organization. It should be pointed out that many of the year's intakes are from persons who had been in contact with PACER before, and those persons were not usually asked how they learned about the organization. Also, mail intakes frequently do not include this information.

Whereas advocacy organizations were the primary sources of referral to PACER Center during the first and second years, many of the callers had attended a PACER workshop and were now asking for additional assistance. It is significant to note that as a result of increased television announcements, 18.7% as compared to 4% last year learned of PACER from TV.

5. Of the total Level V requests, how many were for individual advocacy assistance?

One thousand and one (28%) of the total 4,370 telephone and mail intakes to PACER Center included inquiries classified as "individual advocacy." These included questions relating to the educational needs of individual children.

Some special issues noted by staff members who took the calls included questions about preschool education, post-secondary education, services for handicapped adults, vocational education, and child find. A rapidly growing concern was related services (those services, such as physical therapy and occupational therapy, which are needed by a child in order for him/her to benefit from special education.)

6. What was the sex of each child discussed in advocacy calls? (No. = 804)

Female	262	32.3%
Male	542	67.7%
	804	100%

7. What were the ages of the children discussed? (No. = 791)

Birth - 3	86	10.8
4-5	127	16.1
6-11	311	39.3
12-14	137	17.3
15-18	102	12.9
19-21	12	1.6
22 +	16	2
	791	100%

8. Which primary disability did the children discussed have? (No.= 816)

SLBP (includes learning disabilities, behavior problems and hyperactivity)	270	33%
Physically handicapped	129	16%
Mental retardation & Developmentally delayed	113	14%
Emotionally disturbed	71	9%
Hearing Impairments	60	7%
Speech/language	48	6%
Other health impairments	47	6%
Vision	24	3%
Multiple handicaps	37	5%
Autism	11	1%
Total	816	100%

The percentage breakdown for the various disabilities is very similar to that recorded for 1978-80; learning disabilities, physical handicaps, and mental retardation, continue to constitute the greatest number of calls for individual advocacy assistance.

CONCLUSIONS - LEVEL V

As information about PACER Center's services has spread around the state, requests for individual assistance has increased. These communications included requests for information and referral, workshop inquiries, and requests for advocacy assistance.

In addition to providing training to parents at workshops, PACER believes that individual assistance is an important method of providing training to parents.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF PARENTS WHO RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE

A follow-up survey was conducted by telephone with 50 parents who had received assistance from PACER by telephone with a question related to the education of their handicapped child. Respondents were selected to be generally representative of all callers in terms of age and disability of children and regions of the state. Parents were selected on a stratified random basis.

1. How helpful was the information you received on the telephone? (Number = 50)

37	74%	Very helpful
11	22%	Moderately helpful
1	2	Slightly helpful
1	2	Not at all helpful
50	100%	Total

All of the respondents to this question were asked the reason for their responses. Some of the most frequent responses were: gave the parent support, understanding, confidence and reinforcement, parent received specific answers to specific issues and problems quickly, parent received helpful referrals, parent received verbal communication with printed information as a follow-up, parent was helped to look at and discuss alternatives and what steps to take next.

Some specific comments were "I wasn't aware of these alternatives" and "PACER cleared things up when I needed to make sense out of things" and "I appreciated the quick and caring response from PACER staff" and "PACER didn't pass the buck". Other comments: "I didn't know who to contact and I was glad to find out from PACER the proper person to talk to" and "PACER is what I needed exactly".

2. Did you feel more confident in your ability to work with the schools after speaking to PACER Center? (Number = 50)

42	84%	YES
6	12%	NO
2	4%	OTHER
50	100%	TOTAL

3. Has the information you received enabled you to obtain at least some of the services you feel your child needs? (Number = 50)

34	68%	YES
3	6%	NO
13	26%	OTHER
50	100%	TOTAL

Those who responded in the "Other" category (10 parents or 20% of all surveyed) said they were still in the process of trying to get better service as a result of what they learned from PACER. One parent in the "other" group said they haven't yet tried to obtain any services. Two parents or 4% of all surveyed said their services were already very good.

4. Do you feel that you could have received the assistance you needed if PACER services had not been available?

5	10%	YES
34	68%	NO
10	20%	OTHER
1	2%	DIDN'T KNOW--COULDN'T ANSWER
50	100%	TOTAL

Most of the parents in "Other" category responded that maybe they could have received help from another source such as neighbors, other agencies, but that it would have taken much longer and many more telephone calls to accomplish the same thing.

Comments from parents who said they felt they could not have received assistance elsewhere included:

"I just didn't know of any place else to call."
"Only after talking to PACER did things move fast."
"Certainly hard to say where."

5. Is there anything else you would like us to know? (A few comments were made by more than one person)

"I'd like to help PACER help families and children."
"I've passed PACER's name around to other parents."
"I wish PACER would intervene even more."
"Yes, I need more help."
"PACER goes far beyond information and referral, they really are so caring and so human and interested."
"Parents really do need support when they are involved in an emotional issue over their children and thank goodness PACER is there."

SECTION II

COUNT ME IN
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

COUNT ME IN is a project of PACER Center (The Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights), a coalition of 18 organizations in Minnesota concerned with the education of students with various handicaps. COUNT ME IN trains volunteers to provide educational programs about handicapped individuals to preschool and school age children. The COUNT ME IN project seeks to foster positive attitudes about handicapped people and to dispel myths and fears children may have regarding disabilities. PACER began the COUNT ME IN project in June 1979 under a two year grant from the Department of Personnel Preparation, United States Office of Special Education.

The program was initiated in response to a concern of PACER's Board of Directors and many parents that nonhandicapped children need to become more knowledgeable about disabilities and more accepting of their handicapped peers. PACER felt that a program was needed to help educate children and to assist schools in their efforts to implement programs in the least restrictive environment for handicapped children.

COUNT ME IN seeks to accomplish its goals through three levels of activity. This evaluation report summarizes these levels of service. They are as follows:

LEVEL I - PUBLIC INFORMATION - to inform the general public about the needs of handicapped people and about the COUNT ME IN project.

LEVEL II - VOLUNTEER TRAINING - to inform and train parents, handicapped persons, and other interested people about special education laws, various disabilities, techniques of puppet show presentations, and various awareness projects for children.

Level III - PUPPET SHOW PRESENTATIONS - to reach children in nursery, day care, and elementary schools, and to inform these youngsters about the needs and abilities of handicapped individuals.

INTRODUCTION TO PUPPET PRESENTATIONS

A brief description of the puppet shows is included here because it is helpful to understand the messages that COUNT ME IN presents to children as a background to the public information and training components of the project.

COUNT ME IN uses seven large hand and rod puppets. Six of them represent disabilities (mental retardation, deafness, blindness, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and learning disabilities). The other puppet represents a nonhandicapped child who interacts with and asks questions of the other puppets.

Presentations are given in preschool centers, using three of the handicapped puppets, and in elementary classes, using all of them. The puppeteers (COUNT ME IN staff and volunteers who have participated in the training sessions) operate and speak for the puppets.

The puppets COUNT ME IN purchased were created by Barbara Aiello and Kids on the Block, Inc., a national firm located in Washington, D.C. A number of adaptations were made by COUNT ME IN in the scripts and presentations for elementary aged children. The PACER staff created their own epilepsy and learning disability scripts, and adapted the scripts for preschool children, as well.

The puppets ask each other questions about their handicaps; the questions are the basic, frank questions children often ask. The capabilities of children with handicaps are stressed. The handicapped and nonhandicapped puppets find they have interests in common, and the handicapped puppets tell how they compensate for their handicaps or have learned to use special equipment and aids.

Frequently during the shows, the puppeteers, speaking through their puppets, ask the children in the audience questions that help them identify with common experiences that they share with handicapped children.

At various points in the program, children in the audience are encouraged to ask questions. The puppeteers stay in character, so the children feel they are talking to the puppets rather than to adults. Following the discussion, children have the opportunity to examine each puppet at closer range and to inspect such items as a white cane, a wheelchair, a Braille watch and Braille games, and a hearing aid. At the end of the program, the COUNT ME IN staff, volunteers, and puppets ask the children to join them in singing the COUNT ME IN song:

Maybe we don't all walk the same,
Maybe we don't all talk the same,
But all people want to say,
COUNT ME IN!

COUNT ME IN
SUMMARY AND EVALUATION - 1979-81

During its first two years of operation, June 1, 1979-May 31, 1981, PACER Center's COUNT ME In project reached more than 20,000 people, many more than had been anticipated in goals for the two years. A total of more than 8,000 people were reached directly by the project in the first year, and 12,000 the second year. This includes 173 people who participated in volunteer training sessions, 15,778 children and 499 educators who saw the puppet shows, 2,700 persons who attended presentations and in-service training sessions about COUNT ME IN, and 1,777 persons who contacted the office for information about the project. Many additional persons were reached through public information efforts.

LEVEL I - PUBLIC INFORMATION

Considerable effort was made during the two years to inform the public about the COUNT ME IN project. The general public was informed about the project and made more aware of the needs and abilities of handicapped children through newspaper, radio, and TV publicity in the Twin Cities and outstate areas; through articles in publications of advocacy organizations and agencies; through distribution of more than 10,000 brochures each year and through a number of national publications. In addition, 63 inservice and other presentations (35 the first year, 28 the second) about the project were conducted, reaching 1,100 persons the first year and 1,600 the second.

The specific target audiences of the project's public information efforts were potential volunteers to assist with handicap awareness programs and school personnel who might be interested in scheduling puppet shows. Publicity efforts for both groups succeeded in attracting interest, as indicated by attendance at the volunteer training sessions and the large numbers of schools that requested puppet shows.

LEVEL II - TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

A total of 173 persons participated in the two years of training as volunteers for puppet show presentations and for other handicap awareness programs (97 the first year and 76 the second). The training included information about disabilities, children's rights in special education, and techniques of puppetry. One hundred forty six of these volunteers attended training sessions in Minnesota, and 27 attended COUNT ME IN workshops in Arkansas, where projects similar to COUNT ME IN are being developed.

The effectiveness of the volunteer training is indicated by the evaluation of participants. One hundred percent of the participants, in response to a survey following the training sessions, rated the sessions as either excellent or good. More than three fourths of trainees in Minnesota indicated that they planned to present puppet shows as a means of handicap awareness and many were planning to develop other kinds of handicap awareness programs. The participants' evaluations showed that the training sessions made them feel confident about developing future activities relating to children's questions and concerns about disabilities.

In addition to the evaluation conducted immediately after the training sessions, COUNT ME IN surveyed the Minnesota trainees near the end of the first and second year to determine their opinion of the training after a period of time and to discover what kinds of awareness programs they had been involved in since taking the training. The trainees gave high ratings to the content of the training sessions and 98% stated the training information had been useful to them.

The COUNT ME IN project has been able to reach many more people than originally intended because of volunteers replicating the project. From the respondents who took training the first year, COUNT ME IN noted that the 16 trainees who were a part of Region 7 (East Central Minnesota) pilot project for replication continued their activities in 1980-81, and gave 54 elementary school presentations as well as a high school program and more than 12 community programs, reaching over 3,650 persons in two years.

Two persons from Region 6 (South Central Minnesota) who participated in 1979 training teamed up, and during 1980-81 gave 50 presentations in a 9 school area for 1,000 3rd and 4th graders plus programs for 700 adults. Volunteer trainees from Regions 1 and 4 have visited grade schools in three counties, presenting programs for more than 1,000 children.

LEVEL III - PRESENTATIONS

During the first year of the project, 88 puppet shows were presented in 44 preschool and elementary programs by COUNT ME IN staff and volunteers. In attendance were 5,749 students and 221 teachers and other adults. The second year, 136 shows were presented in 70 schools for 10,029 students and 278 teachers. These figures exceeded the goals for each year: to reach 600 to 900 children and 60 to 100 adults in 25 to 35 schools. Additional funding was received from private sources to assist in reaching more children. Requests made by school personnel for presentations in 100 additional schools had to be turned down each year because of COUNT ME IN's budget and staff limitations.

Ratings of the presentations, both by children and by adults, were overwhelmingly positive. All the teachers who saw the puppet shows rated them as excellent or good, and 71% indicated that they had initiated handicap awareness activities in their classrooms as a result of the COUNT ME IN presentation. Of the 4-6 graders who completed evaluations, 96% said that they liked the shows. In addition, 90% of the students indicated they learned something new about handicapped children, and 93% felt better about relating to children with disabilities.

This evaluation confirms the need for increased handicap awareness activities. The unexpectedly large number of requests for COUNT ME IN presentations indicates that educators are interested in and supportive of the concept of sensitizing children to the needs of persons with handicaps. PACER Center hopes to continue to investigate ways to respond to this interest and to meet this need.

PACER Center believes that the first two years of COUNT ME IN were successful in training volunteers and in informing many children and teachers about the needs and abilities of handicapped individuals.

LEVEL 1 - PUBLIC INFORMATION

PURPOSE

The COUNT ME IN project attempts to achieve two main goals through its public information efforts: (1) to inform the general public of the needs and capabilities of handicapped individuals and (2) to distribute information about the COUNT ME IN project.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

These two goals were achieved in the following ways:

1. News releases about COUNT ME IN training programs were distributed to:
   a. Approximately 50 weekly and daily neighborhood newspapers throughout the metropolitan area.
   b. Approximately 75 newsletters of disability groups, school related organizations, and civic and community organizations such as Scouts, and park programs.

2. Feature articles about COUNT ME IN presentations were printed in school publications and neighborhood newspapers. Several publications of disability organizations and teacher groups included articles and pictures about COUNT ME IN programs.

3. COUNT ME IN staff persons appeared on several television programs in various parts of the state, demonstrating the COUNT ME IN shows and the volunteer training sessions.

4. More than 10,000 COUNT ME IN brochures were distributed to various disability groups, teacher organizations, and civic and community groups. In addition, a letter about the puppet show was given to the children who viewed the presentation at their school, so they could share the information with their parents.

5. Articles about COUNT ME IN appeared in each of the three PACESETTER newsletters printed by PACER in 1980-81. Each issue reached more than 7,000 parents and professionals.

6. PACER staff presentations about COUNT ME IN and the importance of handicap awareness efforts were given to more than 28 groups which included community organizations, disability groups, teacher in-service training sessions, workshops, and university classes. More than 1,600 persons were reached through the presentations.

CONCLUSION - LEVEL I

A high level of interest in handicap awareness has continued through public information efforts the second year of the COUNT ME IN project. Thousands of people were reached through extensive public information, especially articles that appeared in magazines and newspapers. Most of the 28 presentations were made to groups that initiated a request. The project had hoped to reach at least 5,000 people during 1980-81 under Level I, and this goal was exceeded. It is anticipated that public information about COUNT ME IN will help the general public become more aware of the needs and abilities of individuals with handicaps.

LEVEL II - VOLUNTEER TRAINING WORKSHOPS

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

Under Level II, volunteers receive training to present information on handicapping conditions to children. In 1980-81, COUNT ME IN held four training sessions, attended by a total of 76 persons. Two were held in Minneapolis and attended by 31 persons. Two other training sessions for replication purposes were held in Education Regions 1 and 4 of Northwestern Minnesota for 45 persons. COUNT ME IN had proposed to train between 50 and 100 volunteers during its second year.

TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

The content of the training sessions included information on Public Law 94-142, with emphasis on the right of handicapped children to be educated in the least restrictive environment; information on disabilities, feelings of handicapped people, aids and appliances, and resources for and about disabled persons; ideas on ways to respond to questions children ask regarding handicapped children; and techniques of puppetry.

Presenters at the training workshops included professionals in special education, disabled persons, parents of handicapped children, representatives of disability organizations, and members of the PACER staff. Various methods of providing information were used such as lectures, small group discussions, audio-visual materials and actual puppet presentations to small audiences.

The two workshops in Minneapolis for volunteers included the above information, although the formats for the November and March training differed slightly. In November, the training consisted of three, one-day sessions plus an optional fourth day of school observation and puppetry practice. The two day spring training was geared specifically to a select group of persons who wanted to assist with COUNT ME IN presentations.

The two training sessions held in Northwestern Minnesota for purposes of replication included additional materials and discussion about coordinating a project and scheduling school performances. In Region 1, the training was extended over a 2½ day period with an actual show presented for children. The training in Region 4 was condensed into 1½ days.

Each workshop participant received a 92 page training manual which contained extensive information on disabilities, the laws, and various resource materials.

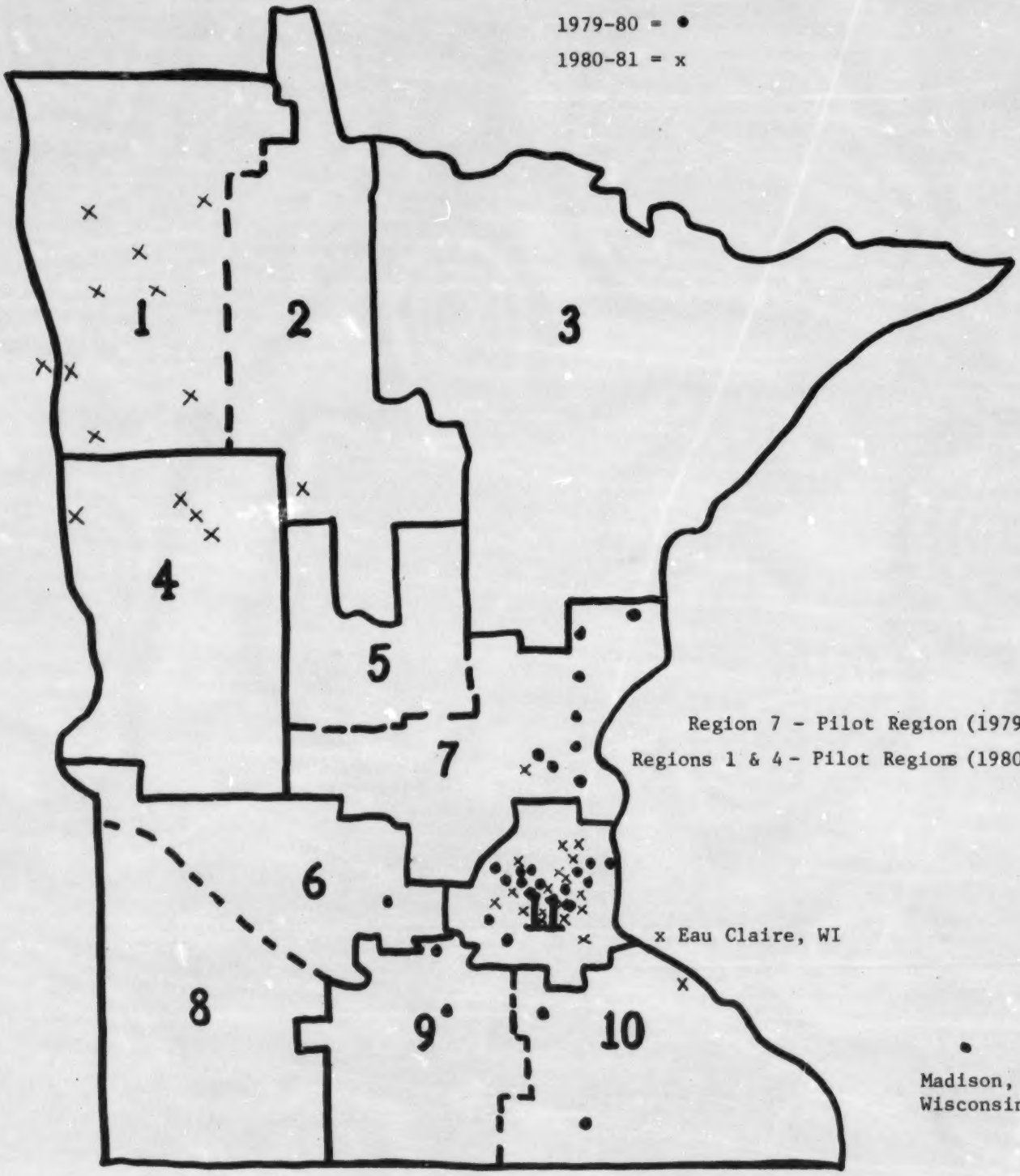
A total of 76 persons participated in the four 1980-81 training workshops. The volunteers represented a variety of backgrounds as well as geographical areas. The following tables display these differences:

VOLUNTEERS	Number	Percentage
Parents of regular education students	19	25%
Parents of special education students	14	18%
Persons with disabilities	6	8%
Not indicated by trainees from Region 1 & 4	37	49%
Total	76	100%

Areas of Minnesota from which participants in COUNT ME IN Volunteer training came.

1979-80 = •

1980-81 = x



EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEER TRAINING IN METROPOLITAN AREA

At the conclusion of the training, participants were requested to complete an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the overall training. Sixteen (51%) of the participants returned the survey. The following questions were asked:

1. Do you think the training you have received on handicapping conditions is sufficient for answering basic questions? (Number respondents = 16)

Response	Number	Percentage
VERY	13	81%
MODERATELY	3	19%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
POORLY	0	0
NO ANSWER	0	0
TOTAL	16	100%

2. How comfortable do you feel about relating to children's questions and concerns about handicapping conditions? (Number = 16)

VERY	11	69%
MODERATELY	5	31%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
POORLY	0	0
NO ANSWER	0	0
TOTAL	16	100%

3. Do you think the COUNT ME IN training sessions have given you sufficient information to encourage positive attitudes about disabled persons in situations other than COUNT ME IN presentations? (Number = 16)

YES	16	100%
NO	0	0
NOT SURE	0	0
TOTAL	16	100%

4. Do you feel the sessions were worthwhile? (Number = 16)

VERY	14	88%
MODERATELY	2	12%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
POORLY	0	0
TOTAL	16	100%

5. How would you rate the overall training? (Number = 16)

EXCELLENT	14	88%
GOOD	2	12%
FAIR	0	0
POOR	0	0
NO ANSWER	0	0
TOTAL	16	100%

6. How do you rate the overall training? (Number = 31)
(Persons who helped with puppet shows)

YES	19	61%
NO	12*	39%
NO ANSWER	-	0
TOTAL	31	100%

*These persons indicated other ways they planned to use the training.

During the first year, 24 volunteers participated in one or more days of COUNT ME IN presentations. During 1980-81, 19 trainees assisted with COUNT ME IN puppet presentations in schools. Four COUNT ME IN volunteers were chosen for specific training to serve on independent COUNT ME IN teams. These 4 volunteers gave 47 shows to pre-schools and elementary schools in the Twin City area.

COMMENTS BY COUNT ME IN 1980-81 VOLUNTEERS

Following are representative comments by participants at the conclusion of the sessions:

"In explaining handicaps to youth and adults, I have used the PACER training material and adaptations of it again and again. I really feel it was the best workshop I have been to." (Volunteer coordinator for residential center)

"As a teacher I have attended many workshops and I felt that this training session was one of the best organized and well done sessions I have ever attended." (Teacher)

"After this training and doing puppet shows, I've become more open with different disabilities. Even though I was in nursing for some years, I think this program has made me more understanding. I have more patience and take more time to listen than before." (Former nurse)

Training for Replication

COUNT ME IN developed a training program to specifically meet the needs of those groups outside the Metro area who wished to create handicap awareness programs through puppetry for their schools. This training for replication was devoted to information about disabilities, methods of describing handicaps to preschool and elementary classes, and ways to address children's questions and concerns. Participants also received information on puppetry techniques, coordination of a project using volunteers, and scheduling school programs.

The Northwest Educational Regions 1 and 4 were chosen as the pilots for replication because of the many requests from those communities, namely, Thief River Falls and Crookston in Region 1 and Detroit Lakes in Region 4.

During October 1980, three COUNT ME IN staff persons traveled to Thief River Falls and presented a 2½ day training to 25 persons from various communities and towns. The group considered not only puppet programs, but also other types of handicap awareness activities.

In December 1980, three COUNT ME IN staff persons presented a 1½ day training in Detroit Lakes to 20 persons from Region 4.

EVALUATION OF TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR REPLICATION

At the conclusion of the replication training in Northwest Minnesota, Region 1 and Region 4, each participant was asked to complete an evaluation. Of the 45 participants, 35 (78%) completed workshop evaluations and answered the following questions:

1. From this training, how confident do you feel about determining the scope of your project? (Number of respondents = 35)

	Number	Percentage
VERY	17	49%
MODERATELY	17	49%
SLIGHTLY	1	2%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
TOTAL	35	100%

2. From this training, how knowledgeable do you feel about handicaps. (Number = 35)

VERY	13	37%
MODERATELY	22	63%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
NOT AT ALL	0	0
TOTAL	35	100%

3. From this training, how confident do you feel about planning school performances for your project? (Number = 35)

VERY	22	63%
MODERATELY	11	31%
SLIGHTLY	1	3%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER	1	3%
TOTAL	35	100%

4. How helpful was it to see an actual puppet presentation before an audience of children? (Number = 35)

VERY	32	91%
MODERATELY	1	3%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER	2	6%
TOTAL	35	100%

5. How helpful were discussions in answering your questions and concerns?

VERY	30	86%
MODERATELY	5	14%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
NOT AT ALL	0	0
TOTAL	35	100%

6. How do you rate the overall training for replicating the COUNT ME IN project in your area? (Number = 35)

	Number	Percentage
EXCELLENT	31	89%
GOOD	4	11%
FAIR	0	0
POOR	0	0
TOTAL	35	100%

Following the training, participants in Region 1 spoke to community, civic and school groups, and did programs for children, including all 3rd and 4th graders in Crookston.

In Region 4 during early 1981, presentations were given to nine elementary schools in Becker and Hubbard counties.

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS OF VOLUNTEER TRAINING THROUGHOUT MINNESOTA

Near the end of the year, follow-up evaluation forms were sent to all 76 participants in COUNT ME IN volunteer training. The purpose was to determine the trainees' opinions of the value of COUNT ME IN training after a period of time and to discover what kinds of awareness programs they had become involved with as a result of the COUNT ME IN training. Fifty four percent (41) of the 76 volunteer trainees returned the questionnaire. The following questions were asked:

1. From your present perspective, do you feel that the COUNT ME IN training was useful to you? (Number = 41)

	Number	Percentage
VERY	28	69%
MODERATELY	12	29%
SLIGHTLY	1	2%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER	0	0
TOTAL	41	100%

2. From the training, do you believe you acquired greater knowledge about (a) handicapping conditions? (Number = 41)

VERY	22	54%
MODERATELY	14	34%
SLIGHTLY	4	10%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER OR HAD EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE BEFORE	1	2%
TOTAL	41	100%

2. From the training, do you believe you acquired greater knowledge about: (continued)

(b) special education laws?

	Number	Percentage
VERY	15	37%
MODERATELY	12	30%
SLIGHTLY	11	26%
NOT AT ALL	2	4%
NO ANSWER OR HAD KNOWLEDGE BEFORE	1	3%
TOTAL	41	100%

(c) resources for information on handicaps?

VERY	18	44%
MODERATELY	15	37%
SLIGHTLY	5	12%
NOT AT ALL	2	4%
NO ANSWER	1	3%
TOTAL	41	100%

3. From the training, do you feel that you acquired a more positive attitude about (a) handicapped people? (Number = 41)

VERY	28	68%
MODERATELY	10	25%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER OR HAD A POSITIVE ATTITUDE BEFORE	3	7%
TOTAL	41	100%

(b) handicapped children integrated into mainstream programs?

VERY	24	59%
MODERATELY	11	26%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER	6	15%
TOTAL	41	100%

4. From the training, do you believe that you now feel more comfortable meeting and relating to handicapped children and adults? (Number = 41)

VERY	27	66%
MODERATELY	9	23%
SLIGHTLY	2	4%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER OR FELT COMFORTABLE BEFORE	3	7%
TOTAL	41	100%

5. From the training, do you feel you have become more supportive of the needs of handicapped children? (Number = 41)

	Number	Percentage
VERY	26	64%
MODERATELY	11	27%
SLIGHTLY	1	2%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER OR FELT COMFORTABLE BEFORE	3	7%
TOTAL	41	100%

6. As a result of the COUNT ME IN training, have you in any way encouraged the development of a program or project to increase awareness of and positive attitudes towards persons with handicaps? (Number = 41)

YES	27	66%
NO	14	34%
TOTAL	41	100%

The 27 participants who responded "YES" listed the following activities they had been involved in since the training:

(a) Volunteers presented programs to children in schools. These included awareness of "hidden disabilities" such as scoliosis and diabetes, as well as demonstrations of various aids and appliances, and use of sign language in story-telling.

(b) Volunteers encouraged parent groups (of handicapped children and nonhandicapped children) to explore own attitudes and feelings, as well as volunteer possibilities in the community.

(c) Volunteers encouraged professionals to promote handicap awareness projects. Included among the professionals were school social workers, special education resource persons, teachers, directors of special education cooperatives, and college faculty members.

(d) Volunteers took part in community awareness projects. These included programs for Girl Scout troops, political groups, park staff members, church groups, business, and programs to acquaint community with new facilities being built available for handicapped persons.

(e) Volunteers approached civic organizations to financially support handicap awareness projects for schools and communities.

7. Have you had any opportunity to give any formal presentations about handicaps or special education laws in any of the following ways: **

		Number	Percentage
(a)	educational programs (other than COUNT ME IN)	8	20%
(b)	entertainment (other than COUNT ME IN)	4	10%
(c)	speeches or talks to schools, college classes, (teachers, civic groups, professionals, etc.)	15	37%
(d)	advocacy effort on behalf of handicapped children or adults	9	22%

Have you had the opportunity to talk informally about handicapping conditions on an individual basis or small group basis with: **

(e)	children	20	49%
(f)	parents	22	54%
(g)	educators	17	41%
(h)	other adults	25	61%

8. From your present perspective, is there any aspect of the training that you wish had received more time and/or emphasis?

YES*	11	27%
NO	21	51%
NO ANSWERS	9	22%
TOTAL	41	100%

*Most frequent responses requested more emphasis on "hidden handicaps", and more time for presentation techniques.

**Responses do not total 100% because multiple answers were given.

CONCLUSIONS

COUNT ME IN training programs for volunteers in Minnesota during 1980-81 were rated as worthwhile by 88% of the respondents. After a period of several months, 98% of the respondents rated the training information as useful. The information from the training was used in a variety of ways by participants.

As a result of the training, 93% of the volunteers felt they had acquired more positive attitudes about handicapped people, 89% felt more comfortable meeting and relating to handicapped children, and 91% felt they had become more supportive of the needs of handicapped children. In each category, an additional 7% indicated they had positive attitudes and were supportive before the training and continued to be so.

For many of the participants who were not parents of handicapped children or disabled themselves, COUNT ME IN provided an initial understanding of Public Law 94-142 and the concept of the least restrictive alternative. From the evaluations, it was evident that the concept of "mainstreaming" had become more meaningful to the volunteers. Also, the information on disabilities and presentations by disabled persons and parents of handicapped children served as a beginning for further study and awareness on the part of many volunteers.

LEVEL III PRESENTATIONS

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

COUNT ME IN, under the federal grant from the Office of Special Education, Department of Personnel Preparation, presented 74 puppet programs about handicapping conditions to children in 37 nursery schools, day care centers, and elementary schools between December 1, 1980 and May 21, 1981, reaching 5,964 children and 194 teachers. The original goal of COUNT ME IN was to give 50 presentations in 25-35 preschools and elementary schools, reaching 699-900 children and 60-100 teachers.

COUNT ME IN made efforts to exceed these totals because of the great demand from schools for the presentations. Two methods were used--grants from private and corporate foundations, and contracts with school districts for a particular number of shows.

With a grant from General Mills and Northwestern National Bank, an independent team of COUNT ME IN puppeteers gave 21 programs in 17 Twin City area schools for nearly 1,000 (919) students, (mostly preschoolers) and more than 24 teachers.

Under a pilot project to contract with school districts, COUNT ME IN staff and an independent team gave 41 programs (23-St. Paul, and 18 districts outside the metro area: Eau Claire, Olivia-Bird Island, and St. Peter) at 16 schools for more than 3,000 children (1,541-St. Paul and 1,605-others) and 60 teachers.

The total number of students reached through all COUNT ME IN activities for 1980-81 was 10,029 at 136 shows in 70 preschools and elementary schools.

The content and disability information of the puppet programs were adapted for the ages and grade levels of the audiences. Two basic programs were developed. A 45 minute program for preschool and kindergarten children included presentations on blindness, deafness, and cerebral palsy. For elementary children in grades 1-6, the program was expanded to one hour and presentations on mental retardation, epilepsy, and learning disabilities, in addition to the other 3, were available as choices for the program. Each disability was discussed in a 7-10 minute skit that usually involved two puppets, one with the particular handicap, and the other as a nonhandicapped friend.

At the conclusion of the puppet shows, children were each given a COUNT ME IN button to wear, and a COUNT ME IN letter to take home to parents. Teachers received materials for their classrooms (Braille cards, sign language cards, and a copy of the COUNT ME IN song) and each school received a COUNT ME IN Resource Packet for all teachers. Grants from Northwestern Bank and Control Data enabled PACER to make buttons and materials available to all participants at the COUNT ME IN presentations.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION ACTIVITIES

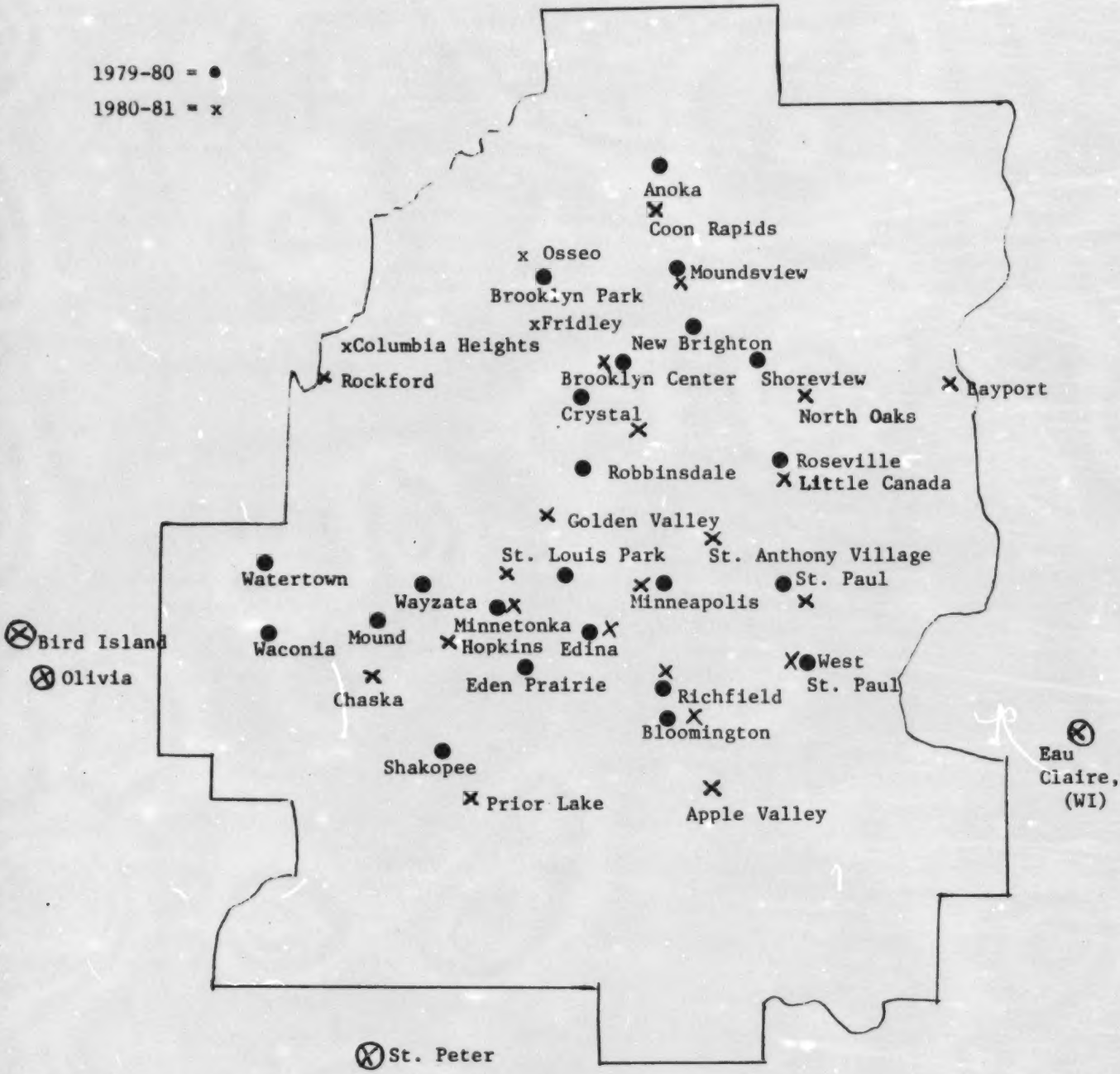
1. How many presentations were given?

   Of 118 presentations for 8,424 children in 61 Twin Cities area schools, 25 (22%) of the presentations were programs for preschool children from 20 nursery schools, and day care centers. Ninety-three (78%) of the presentations were given to children in kindergarten through sixth grade classes at 41 schools.

   In selecting schools for presentations, efforts were made to reach a cross-section of the metropolitan area. A map on the following page depicts locations of 1980-81 presentations.

COUNT ME IN
LOCATIONS OF PUPPET SHOWS
(1979-81)

(Seven County Twin City Metropolitan Area)
1 inch = 13 miles - ⊗ Outside Metro area



2. How many children and school personnel viewed the program?

Of the 10,029 children who viewed the COUNT ME IN program, 839 (9%) were preschoolers, 848 (9%) were kindergarten students, and 8,342 (82%) were 1st through 6th graders.

PACER staff allowed for a maximum audience size for preschool performance of 40 children with parents encouraged to attend. For elementary programs, PACER staff preferred an audience of no more than approximately 60-90 children (2 to 3 classes). The small audience size permitted personal interaction of students with puppets and equipment.

EVALUATION OF COUNT ME IN PRESENTATIONS

PACER Center evaluated the COUNT ME IN presentations by surveying the children and teachers who viewed the programs.

PACER used the following three types of evaluations:

1. Pre and post performance student evaluations completed by selected audiences of 4th to 6th graders.

2. Post performance evaluations completed by all classroom teachers.

3. Follow-up teacher evaluations of the project after a period of several months.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

To assess responses from children to the COUNT ME IN programs, a pre and post performance evaluation instrument was developed by the PACER staff. The instrument selected was administered to 469 students in grades four through six during the first year. During the second year, that same form was given to 435 students in grades four through six who viewed the programs.(For results of 1979-80 student evaluation, see PACER Center Evaluation Report, 1979-80 pp. 52-80.)

The children were asked to complete an evaluation survey before the presentation. Immediately following the puppet presentation but before moving around the room to talk to puppets individually or examine equipment on display, children were asked to complete the post presentation survey. All evaluations were administered by PACER staff person. For purposes of instruction, students were given hypothetical examples to be sure they clearly understood the directions.

The student evaluation was designed to measure children's responses in two ways: (1) in terms of their responses to the presentation itself (2) in terms of their comfort level with disabilities and acceptance of handicapped children.

The pre and post performance evaluation consisted of six questions which were chosen to elicit responses related to opinions, misconceptions, and knowledge that children might have about disabilities and handicapped persons. For each question, children had a choice of five responses arranged on a five point Likert Scale. The post presentation evaluation included three additional questions to elicit direct responses to COUNT ME IN goals. The following is a sample of the student evaluation.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ON THREE QUESTIONS FOR OVERALL GOALS -- 1980-81

Student reactions to the COUNT ME IN program and its goals are revealed in responses given to the three general questions asked on the post evaluation. The tables below demonstrate student responses:

Questions

1. Did you like the COUNT ME IN show? (Number of students = 435)

	Number	Percentage
YES	416	96%
NO	3	0+
NO ANSWER	16	4%
TOTAL	435	100%

2. Did you learn anything new about handicaps today? (N = 435)

YES	381	88%
NO	29	6%
NO ANSWER	25	6%
TOTAL	435	100%

3. After seeing the COUNT ME IN show, do you feel better about handicapped children? (N = 435)

YES	401	92%
NO	14	3%
NO ANSWER	20	5%
TOTAL	435	100%

ON SIX STATEMENTS FOR ATTITUDE CHANGE

The six statements used on the pre and post evaluation forms to determine student attitudes were analyzed for the purpose of determining the overall percentage of students marking each item's response category on the Likert Scale.

In tabulating the results of the evaluations and analyzing the data on the replies to the six statements, it was noted that there was considerable variation from school to school on both the pre test responses and the post test responses for each of the six statements. No studies of the separate sites were conducted prior to the COUNT ME IN presentations to determine the extent of previous handicap awareness efforts or students' acquaintance with handicapped persons.

Although all responses to each question were tabulated, PACER was most interested in the number of students who chose the "most positive response" for each statement. Thus the following graphs demonstrate the percentages of children who gave the "most desirable response" to each of the questions, such as "agree a lot" or "disagree a lot." The pre test and post test responses from the 4-6th grade children at each school are illustrated to show amount of change after the show. The column to the far right on the graph for each question shows the average percentage of pre and post test results for the "most desirable" response from all 435 students.

GRAPHS OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

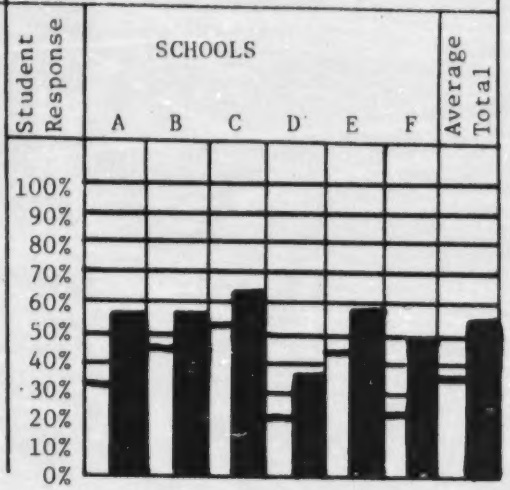
STATEMENT

MOST DESIRABLE RESPONSE

☐ % Before the show ■ % After the show

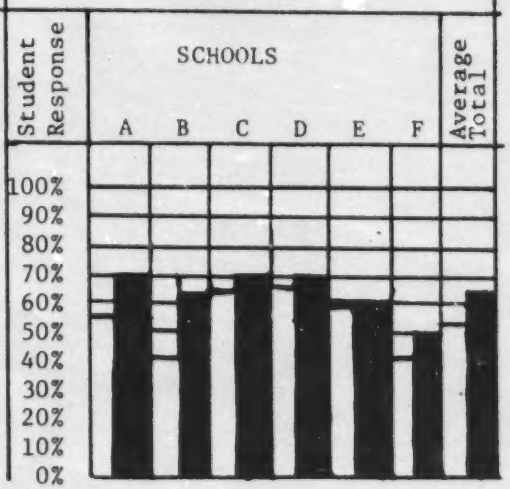
1. I am scared to play with handicapped kids. (Most desirable response: "Disagree a lot") (N=435)	% of students who "disagreed a lot"

The far right column of the graph shows that while an average of 37% of the students had the most desirable response before the show, 55% demonstrated the most desirable response after the show. That represents an increase of 18% of the children who chose the most desirable response after the show.



2. A handicapped child would be welcome in my classroom. (Most desirable response: "Agree a lot") (N=435)	% of students who "agreed a lot"

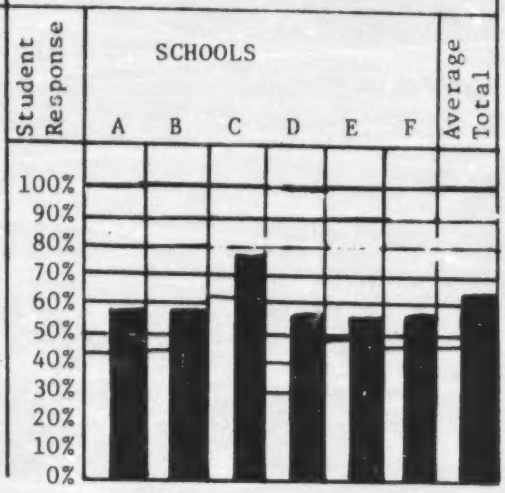
The right hand column of the graph shows that while an average of 53% of the students had the most desirable response before the show, 65% had the most desirable response after the show, indicating an increase of 12% of children who cited the most desirable response after the show.



3. Handicapped kids like to be alone most of the time. (Most desirable response: "Disagree a lot.") (N=435)

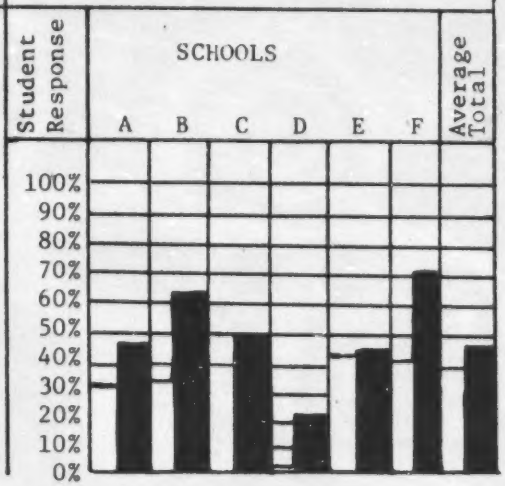
% of students who "disagreed a lot"

The column to the right of the graph shows that an average of 45% of the students had the most desirable response before the show, while 61% chose the most desirable response after the show, indicating an increase of 16 percentage points in the number of children who chose the most desirable response after the show.



4. I would like to have a handicapped person for my friend. (Most desirable response: "Agree a lot") (N=435)

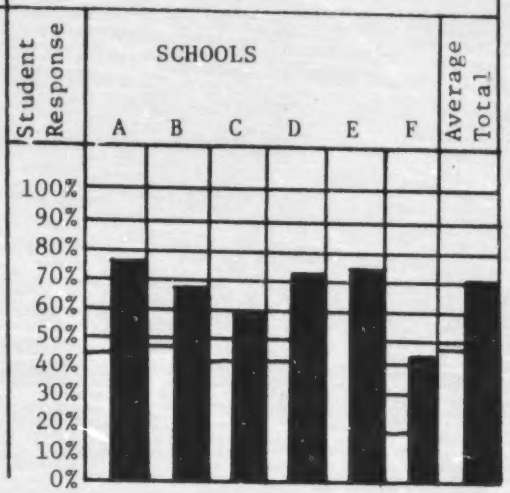
The averages for all student responses show that 31% of the students had the most desirable response before the show, while 45% cited that choice on the post presentation evaluation. That reflects an increase of 14 percentage points in the number of students who chose the most desirable response after the show.



5. Handicapped kids can do lots of things. (Most desirable response: "Agree a lot.") (N= 435)

% of students who "agreed a lot"

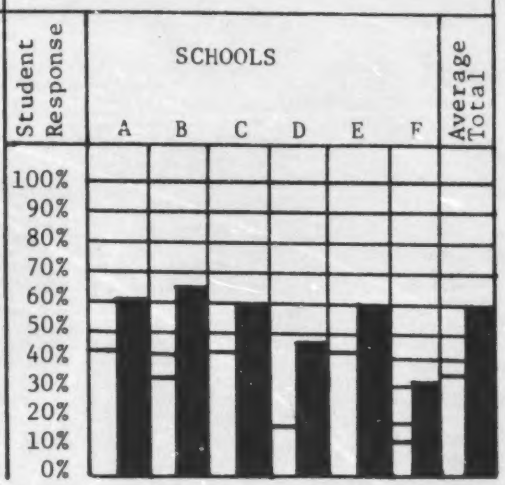
As demonstrated in the right far column of the graph, 46% of the students chose the most appropriate response before the show, while 71% cited that choice after the show. That indicates an increase of 25 percentage points in the number of students who chose the most desirable response after the show.



6. Handicapped kids are sad most of the time. (Most desirable response: "Disagree a lot.") (N=435)

% of students who "disagreed a lot"

The averages for all students' responses show that 35% of the students chose the most desirable response before the presentation, while 58% made that choice after the show, indicating an increase of 23 percentage points in the number of students who gave the most desirable response after the show.



The number of most desirable responses to each of the six statements listed previously was increased following the COUNT ME IN presentations. An average of 41% of 435 students who chose the most desirable response ("agree a lot" or "disagree a lot") to the various questions on the pre test. However, on post evaluation form, an average of 59% of all students chose the most desirable answer, which represents an increase of 18% of children giving the most desirable response to all questions.

The previous graphs represent only the most desirable responses to questions on pre and post tests.

STUDENT COMMENTS

Children were asked for personal comments about the program. Many of them give added insight to student's reactions.

> "I enjoyed the show very much. Now I understand what it is like to be handicapped."
>
> "I learned a lot from this show."
>
> "I think you did a good job getting the idea across that handicapped kids can do lots of things."

CONCLUSIONS - STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Analysis of the evaluation results indicate that from a student perspective, the COUNT ME IN program was meaningful and helped to foster positive attitudes. Ninety-six percent of the students stated they liked the show, 92% felt better about handicapped children after participating in the COUNT ME IN project, and 88% reported they learned something new about handicaps. The puppet presentation, with opportunities for questions and experimentation with aids and appliances, helped dispel fears and apprehensions, and acquainted children with feelings and abilities of handicapped children.

An average of 59% of all students gave the "most desirable response" to six questions on attitudes after the COUNT ME IN presentation, while only 41% of the students had done so before the show. Thus it appears that COUNT ME IN made a significant contribution toward fostering positive attitudes.

TEACHER EVALUATIONS

To determine the effectiveness of the COUNT ME IN program from the perspective of the classroom teacher, PACER developed an evaluation form for teachers to complete immediately after the program. Although the evaluation was given to all teachers, for this report only the responses from the 194 teachers whose programs were under the auspices of Office of Special Education Grant are cited.

The following charts show the responses:

1. How would you rate the COUNT ME IN presentation? (Number = 194)

	Elem. Teacher	Preschool Teacher	Total Teacher Response
EXCELLENT	126	40	86%
GOOD	18	9	14%
FAIR	0	0	0
POOR	0	0	0
NO ANSWER	0	1	0
TOTAL	144	50	100%

2. Did the information on disabilities seem appropriate for the age of your children? (Number = 194)

VERY APPROPRIATE	125	38	84%
APPROPRIATE	18	12	15%
SLIGHTLY	1	0	1%
NOT APPROPRIATE	0	0	0
TOTAL	144	50	100%

3. How informative do you believe the show was for your students? (No. = 194)

VERY INFORMATIVE	121	35	80%
INFORMATIVE	23	13	18%
SLIGHTLY	0	1	1%
NOT AT ALL	0	0	0
NO ANSWER	0	1	1%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

4. Was the program the right length of time for your children? (Number = 194)

YES	143	50	99%
NO: TOO LONG	1	0	1%
NO RESPONSE	0	0	0
TOTAL	144	50	100%

5. Do you believe the COUNT ME IN show will help improve attitudes that children in your classroom may have toward handicapped children? (Number = 194)

A GREAT DEAL	115	36	78%
MODERATELY	26	11	19%
SLIGHTLY	1	2	2%
NOT AT ALL	1	1	1%
NO RESPONSE	1	0	0
TOTAL	144	50	100%

6. Following the COUNT ME IN presentation, I now feel (a) more comfortable helping a handicapped student fit into my class. (Number = 194)

	Elem. Teacher	Preschool Teacher	Total Teacher Response
STRONGLY AGREE	53	19	37%
AGREE	67	26	48%
DISAGREE	6	1	4%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	4	0	2%
NO RESPONSE	14	4	9%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

(b) more comfortable helping nonhandicapped students understand disabilities. (Number = 194)

STRONGLY AGREE	72	22	48%
AGREE	55	22	40%
DISAGREE	4	0	2%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	3	0	2%
NO RESPONSE	10	6	8%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

(c) more comfortable helping classroom teachers deal with handicapped students. (Number = 194)

STRONGLY AGREE	49	17	34%
AGREE	59	22	42%
DISAGREE	8	2	5%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	3	0	1%
NO RESPONSE	25	9	18%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

7. I am interested in using follow-up activities on handicaps with children. (Number = 194)

YES	104	39	74%
NO	13	5	9%
NO RESPONSE	27	6	17%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

8. It would be helpful to me as a teacher to read specific information on disabilities. (Number = 194)

YES	105	39	74%
NO	10	4	7%
NO RESPONSE	29	7	19%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

9. I would appreciate information that would enable me to better recognize "hidden handicaps." (Number = 194)

	Elem. Teacher	Preschool Teacher	Total Teacher Response
YES	84	29	58%
NO	25	9	18%
NO RESPONSE	35	12	24%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

10. I would like more information about communicating with parents of handicapped children. (Number = 194)

YES	63	21	43%
NO	33	15	25%
NO RESPONSE	48	14	32%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

11. I would be interested in receiving training about methods of fostering positive attitudes about disabilities. (Number = 194)

YES	53	17	36%
NO	40	22	32%
NO RESPONSE	51	11	32%
TOTAL	144	50	100%

The questions that addressed teachers' specific concerns indicated that following the presentation, between 85% and 88% of the teachers felt more comfortable about having handicapped children in their classes and helping nonhandicapped students learn about disabilities.

Many of the teachers requested programs and/or materials about specific handicaps. In addition, requests for general information on disabilities were made by several teachers. Many of the teachers who answered "NO" to the questions on general information did add that they would be interested in further information on handicaps if and when a handicapped child were mainstreamed into their classroom.

TEACHER FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS

PACER also was interested to learn about ongoing influences the COUNT ME IN program may have had on the activities in the classroom. In May, PACER sent follow-up evaluations to the 194 classroom teachers whose students had viewed the program under auspices of the federal grant. Seventy percent (136) returned the forms, 106 elementary teachers and 30 preschool teachers.

Twenty-five (18%) of the teachers responded that they had received comments from parents whose children had seen the show. All of those comments were positive. The most frequent statements made by parents were that they "were glad their children had had the opportunity to see such a unique presentation on disabilities" and "the children talked about it at home for several days afterwards."

The questionnaire on follow-up activities used in the classroom was included to learn what teachers had done. Teachers were asked to check the follow-up activities used in their classrooms:

	Elem. Teacher	Preschool Teacher	Total Teacher Response
CLASS DISCUSSION ON HANDICAPS	94	26	88%
SIMULATION ACTIVITIES	20	8	21%
BOOKS ABOUT HANDICAPS READ BY/FOR CHILDREN	41	17	43%
FILMS ABOUT HANDICAPS OR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN	31	0	23%
SPEAKERS ON HANDICAPS	17	3	15%
EQUIPMENT BROUGHT IN	11	7	13%
FIELD TRIPS RELATED TO HANDICAPS	5	2	5%
OTHER ACTIVITIES	14	5	14%
TOTAL	233*	68	221% *

*While every teacher checked at least one activity, many teachers responded to more than one of the above activities. Therefore, the totals exceed 100%.

Teacher perspectives were valuable in evaluating increases in student handicap awareness. The teacher responses are demonstrated in the following charts.

1. Following the COUNT ME IN program, the majority of children in my class gained knowledge (facts) about disabled persons. (Number = 136)

STRONGLY AGREE	59	17	56%
AGREE	38	10	35%
DISAGREE	1	1	2%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0	0
NO RESPONSE	8	2	7%
TOTAL	106	30	100%

2. Following the COUNT ME IN program, the majority of children in my class demonstrated positive changes in attitudes towards persons with handicaps. (Number = 136)

STRONGLY AGREE	38	7	33%
AGREE	49	14	47%
DISAGREE	6	1	5%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0	0
NO ANSWER	13	8	15%
TOTAL	106	30	100%

3. In what ways has the COUNT ME IN program been helpful to you in the classroom?

The most frequent replies were that COUNT ME IN stimulated ongoing discussion about and awareness of handicapped children, that sutdents became more understanding of handicapped children in their classrooms, and that misconceptions were corrected. Teachers also cited evidence of how COUNT ME IN had benefited them personally by making them aware of the capabilities of handicapped people.

TEACHER CONCLUSIONS

The evaluations showed that 100% of the teachers rated the program as excellent or good as well as appropriate and informative for their children. Ninety-one percent of the teachers believed children gained knowledge about handicaps, while 80% believed the program increased students' positive attitudes towards handicapped children.

COUNT ME IN
SUMMARY OF TELEPHONE AND MAIL COMMUNICATIONS

During its second year, the COUNT ME IN project of PACER Center received 827 telephone and mail communications. The following charts demonstrate the distributions of those intakes:

NATURE OF INTEREST

Professionals	491	59%
Parents of Handicapped Children	113	14%
Advocacy Representatives	38	5%
Parents of Nonhandicapped Children	19	2%
Others	166	20%
Total	827	100%

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

11W (Minneapolis & suburbs)	353	43%
11E (St. Paul & suburbs)	204	25%
10 (Southern Minnesota)	22	3%
9 (Southern Minnesota)	17	2%
8 (Southwestern Minnesota)	7	1%
7 (Central Minnesota)	38	5%
6 (Central Minnesota)	20	2%
5 (Central Minnesota	12	1%
4 (West Central Minnesota)	9	1%
3 (Northeastern Minnesota)	8	1%
2 (Northwestern Minnesota)	7	1%
1 (Northwestern Minnesota)	8	1%
Out of State	119	14%
Total	827	100%

The requests made through the telephone and mail communications were categorized into the three levels of activity engaged in by COUNT ME IN.

NATURE OF INQUIRY

Level I - General information about COUNT ME IN	789	95%
Level II - Volunteer Training	152	18%
Level III - COUNT ME IN presentations	346	42%
Total	1,287*	155%*

*These totals exceed the 827 (100%) intakes because, in many instances, more than one request was made per communication.

APPENDIX

PACER CENTER, INC.
PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Comprehensive Epilepsy Program
Courage Center
Friends of Hearing Handicapped Children
Mental Health Assoc. of Minnesota
Mental Health Advocates' Coalition
Minneapolis Assoc. for the Hearing Impaired
Minnesota Assoc. for Children With Learning Disabilities
Minnesota Assoc. for Retarded Citizens
Minnesota Committee for the Handicapped
Minnesota Epilepsy League
Minnesota Foundation for Better Hearing and Speech
Minnesota Speech-Language and Hearing Assoc.
Minnesota State Council for the Handicapped
Muscular Dystrophy Assoc. of Minnesota
Natl. Fed. of the Blind of Minn.
Spina Bifida Assoc. of Minn.
Twin Cities Society for Autistic Children
United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota

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